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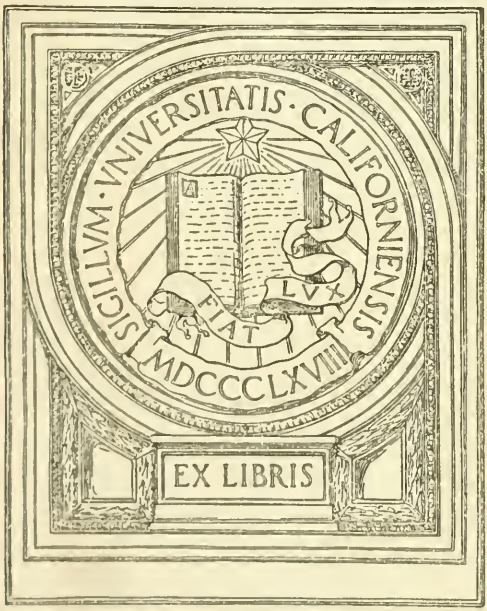

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A WOMAN
OF WIT AND WISDOM

A WOMAN OF WIT AND WISDOM

A MEMOIR OF ELIZABETH CARTER
ONE OF THE
'BAS BLEU' SOCIETY

(1717–1806)

BY

ALICE C. C. GAUSSEN

AUTHOR OF 'A LATER PEPYS'

WITH PORTRAITS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILE

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PREFACE

Few but the most enthusiastic students of the eighteenth century can find time to dig for the hidden treasures that lie buried in the numerous volumes containing the life and letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter. To throw light upon the brilliant picture of her personality, brimful of animation, and of mental and physical activity, and to focus the many side-lights that stream in from various sources upon the stage on which this remarkable woman moved, with men and women of genius clustering in the foreground, it is necessary to explore the mass of contemporary literature that recalls her times, and the gifted circle to which she belonged.

The endeavour to bring back, however faintly, even a breath of the atmosphere of those days that are long since gone is a refreshing and invigorating task. No picture can ever be complete. There must always be a side

that is not shown. Every artist has a tendency to catch the characteristics that appeal to himself, and give his sitter somewhat of his own expression, as in the French fable each animal asserted that the harlequin was entirely of his own hue. But it is in the expression that the likeness consists, and it is just this that is to be found surviving in the quaint and original, though perhaps slightly eccentric character of Elizabeth Carter. Though the versatility of her thoughts and sayings may make the narrative appear to a certain extent disjointed, I have tried, as far as possible, to tell the story of her life in her own words, gathered from all sources, for it is only by letting the real Mrs. Carter speak for herself that we can see her as she was.

Erratic and eccentric she could only appear to those who mistrust the unconventional, and hesitate to say and write what they really think. Elizabeth Carter spoke her mind without disguise, for the simple reason that of her inmost thoughts she had no reason to be ashamed. Reserve, while adding force and dignity to the strongest characters, may if carried too far stifle and kill originality, and reduce them to a conventional dead level. Mrs. Carter, though

she 'lets herself go,' is entirely free from the opposite extreme of gush and sentimentality. Epictetus taught men to restrain, but not suppress, the movements of the heart.

It was a strong sympathy between the ancient philosopher Epictetus and his eighteenth-century translator, Elizabeth Carter, which led her after the lapse of many centuries to reveal him to English readers. Both were thinkers ; both were sufferers ; both bore their sufferings cheerfully according to their different lights, and both were philosophers.

Mrs. Carter saw no virtue in suffering. She did not demand that the narrow path should be full of thorns ; but was content with those already planted there, and did not insist on the spiked girdle and other self-imposed aids to mental and physical discomfort. For this, some will condemn her as too self-satisfied and optimistic.

On the other hand, her childlike faith and implicit assurance of a joyful hereafter will not be in accordance with the more fashionable views of those who hold the doctrine 'Carpe diem.' Between these two extremes she steered a middle course, but in that happy medium, where truth is generally to be found, she

escaped mediocrity. Her rule, like that of Epictetus, was 'bear and forbear;' she just went her own way, and left other people to go theirs. She never tried, like the man in the fable, to carry the donkey, or to pose in unnatural attitudes.

Elizabeth Carter possessed a genius for friendship that prevented her life being a lonely one, though in some respects it was solitary, as the lives of all must be whose thoughts and aspirations are not quite normal, or on a level with that of their average fellow-creatures, for the probability of being associated with those of like mind, scattered here and there in the world and up and down the ages, is always remote. From her inability to make talk, she was held of small account by those 'Deal misses' whose chatter only reflected the local gossip of their native town, and no one could suppose that any of the 'Strephons' who in her youth had done her the honour of wishing to marry her would have proved congenial companions through life. Neither the faithless versifier to whom she was really attached, nor the impetuous youth whose 'wig was always in an uproar,' nor yet the inquisitive Yorkshireman would have added to her happiness or useful-

ness. As to those grave prelates, statesmen, and men of letters who in her later years the world declared would marry Madam Carter, she was far too sensible a woman to mistake their friendship and respect for any other sentiment, or to suppose that they had 'any such intention.' However, under other circumstances, she would no doubt have accommodated herself cheerfully to their idiosyncrasies as she did to those of her own relations. She never complained of being misunderstood by her family, that constant lamentation of the egotistical which a present-day preacher wisely meets with the prompt assurance that the family of the interesting sufferer understand her only too well.

Mrs. Carter's life was spent to a great extent in retirement, but her outlook on the world from her little 'vinegar bottle' at Deal, like that of Epictetus from his hut at Rome, was one of an acute and judicious observer of manners, and her instructions, like his, were free from dogmatism, vanity, or rudeness. She was a woman of the world in the best sense of the word. By her little touches of humour she shows how much she knew of human nature and its ways. She never sneers, nor

frowns, nor grumbles; she is never cynical, nor sarcastic, nor contemptuous; but she has a wonderful way of hitting hard and hitting straight. If at times she seems to soar in the clouds, she always manages to come down on her feet. Her flights of imagination are just enough to give us for one instant an additional peep of that smile which beams, and plays, and twinkles, and hovers over her whole character, as it is conjured up to us.

It has been said that in common with other of the 'Bas Bleu' ladies, Elizabeth Carter lacked a certain lightness of touch; but it must be remembered that it is always easier to float gracefully and quietly with the stream than to pull vigorously against it, and those who joined Dr. Johnson in his endeavour 'to make mankind more reasonable creatures,' trod the thorny path of the reformer.

Her eager activities in the early morning hours may perhaps give the idea of restlessness. There is an impetus in the woman which might expose her to the charge of having been impulsive and headstrong, and unable to sit still. But we look again, and see her at her work, and her assiduity is such, she is so riveted, so concentrated, that we seem to find her all at once

transformed to a silent, motionless statue, totally absorbed, and wholly unconscious of everything except her task. She also knows how to rest, and can enjoy 'basking in the sun, indolently happy, mighty tranquil, in an absolute vacation of all thought.' Both in repose and in action she possesses a charm and dignity which her marvellous vitality and vivacity only serve to enhance.

It speaks well for the bracing climate of Deal that such a character should have been nurtured there. Like the sea, which is ever changing its tints only to reveal fresh beauties, so this hardy child of nature seems to breathe the fresh sea air of her native place all through her life. Like the sea-gull that rests calmly on the crest of the stormy wave, or skims along it and dives for its prey, so this lady of many sides and accomplishments seems to have been here, there, and everywhere, roaming free and unfettered in the very largeness of her own expanse and outlook. The hard strain of work brought her no weariness, no reaction, for she was not in the habit of looking back; she was far too interested ever to be bored. With her, *ennui* was impossible. There is a *bonhomie* about her that speaks for itself, and the object

of this book will be fulfilled if it puts its readers in touch with the clever, kindly cheerfulness which belongs to Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, and is peculiarly her own.

I desire to express my thanks to Mr. Robert Brudenell Carter, whose grandfather, Henry Carter, was half-brother to Elizabeth, and until he entered the University was entirely educated by her. Besides writing the genealogical appendix relating to the Carter family, Mr. Brudenell Carter has allowed me to use letters and papers in his possession, and two books of hitherto unpublished correspondence that were kindly placed at his disposal by the Mayor of Deal and the 'Carter Institute' in that town. Also I desire to thank Mr. Taylor-Whitehead for his kindness in making researches and furnishing me with many interesting facts.

The portrait of Bishop Hayter has been reproduced, by kind permission of the Bishop of London, from the picture at Fulham Palace, and the view of Deal, by the courtesy of Mr. Soutter, from an engraving in his possession.

For most of the other illustrations I am indebted to Mr. Brudenell Carter. The original medallion, reproduced on the cover of the book, was modelled from the life in wax,

and cast in hard white enamel paste by James Tassie (1735–90), the well-known Glasgow artist, who settled in London in 1766. He executed portraits of Adam Smith and many other eminent Scotsmen. Specimens of his work are now rare in this country, as they have been largely acquired by American collectors. But there is a collection of his medallions in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. His medallion of Elizabeth Carter is enclosed in a crystal pendant, and bears the monogram of her sister, Mrs. Douglas, at the back. It passed afterwards into the possession of Mrs. Carter's niece, the Princesse de Vismes et de Penthièvre, and is now owned by Mr. Brudenell Carter.

In this, as in all my work, I acknowledge the kind help and advice that I have found literary friends ever ready to give.

ALICE C. C. GAUSSEN.

88 EATON PLACE : *February* 1906.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	vii
I	'A LONG LIFE WITHOUT A STORY'	1
II.	DEAL	29
III.	MRS. CARTER'S VIEWS ON MARRIAGE	60
IV.	ARCHBISHOP SECKER AND CATHARINE TALBOT	78
V.	MRS. CARTER'S LITERARY WORKS AND PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS	92
VI.	SOCIETY	125
VII.	DR. JOHNSON	161
VIII.	MRS. MONTAGU	174
IX.	MRS. VESEY	189
X.	LORD BATH	202
XI.	SPA AND FOREIGN TOUR	215
XII.	BODY AND MIND	227
	APPENDIX: GENEALOGICAL NOTE. BY ROBERT BRUDENELL CARTER, F.R.C.S.	255

ILLUSTRATIONS

ELIZABETH CARTER . . . . . *Frontispiece*

From a crayon drawing by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

DEAL . . . . . *To face p.* 30

From an engraving after a painting by J. W. M. Turner, R.A.)

THOMAS HAYTER, BISHOP OF LONDON . „ 66

From a painting in Fulham Palace.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON . . . . . „ 70

From a painting by Joseph Highmore in the National Portrait Gallery.

CATHARINE TALBOT . . . . . „ 78

From the frontispiece to 'The Works of the late Miss Catharine Talbot,' 1812.

THOMAS SECKER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY . . . . . „ 100

From an engraving after a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

BOOK PLATE OF ELIZABETH CARTER . . „ 128

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D. . . . . „ 162

After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.)

WILLIAM PULTENEY, EARL OF BATH . . „ 202

From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.)

ANCELL MONUMENT IN GREAT BARFORD CHURCH . . . . . „ 256

From a photograph.

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM ELIZABETH CARTER TO HER BROTHER, DATED NOVEMBER 1, 1798 . . . . „ 186

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Elizabeth Carter was born in	1717
Wrote verses in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' signed 'Eliza'	1734
Published a small collection of poems	1738
Translated from the French an attack on Pope's 'Essay on Man,' by M. Crousaz	1739
Translated from the Italian Algarotti's 'Newtonianismo per le Dame'	1739
Commenced her translation of Epictetus at the request of Archbishop Secker	1749
Published her translation of Epictetus by guinea subscription	1758
Printed a second collection of poems, dedicated to Lord Bath	1762
Removed to a house of her own at Deal	1762
Travelled on the Continent with Mr. and Mrs. Montagu and Lord Bath	1763
Lost her friend, William Pulteney, Earl of Bath	1764
Archbishop Secker died	1768
Catharine Talbot died	1770
Dr. Nicholas Carter (her father) died	1774
Dr. Johnson died	1784
Mrs. Carter was presented to Queen Charlotte at Lord Cremorne's house at Chelsea	1791
Died February 19	1806

A WOMAN
OF
WIT AND WISDOM

CHAPTER I

'A LONG LIFE WITHOUT A STORY'

As the personality of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter claims our attention, more than either her life or works, her uneventful career, marked by few of the epochs which form the milestones of the individual life, is best recorded in her own quaint phraseology. No attempt has been made to modernise her language, which is characteristic both of herself and her period; all that she wrote, said, or thought has, as far as possible, been interwoven into the story, which was the method by which Boswell said 'mankind were enabled to see his hero live.' Modern English she could not endure. She

lived to see the mushroom growth of a new language, filled with phrases which nobody could have understood when she was young, and there seemed to be such a rage for writing ; and 'Oh, lack! What writing,' as somebody used to say, 'what writation it all is!' It was her woeful destiny on one occasion to entertain a Beauty, who made most fearful counterfeit coinage of the current language of this land. Happily, she could not foresee the modern young woman, who is not even as 'a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,' for she often lacks beauty as well as discretion, and will tell you with a languid drawl, that she is '*so fearfully devoted* to electric light.' Only when the phrase had meaning, when under the influence of strong emotion she thought the whole circulation of her blood would have stopped, did Elizabeth Carter declare she had never seen or felt anything so '*shockingly well acted*' as the part of Shylock.

To Epictetus's uneventful life and circumscribed surroundings Dean Farrar applies the saying, that 'Great men have often the shortest biographies, their real life is in their books ;' it might equally be said of his translator, Elizabeth Carter, that her life was in her

quaint personality, well-regulated mind, and her shrewd and witty sayings.

She was born on December 16, 1717, at Deal, and passed the greater part of her life in those regions of obscurity and dulness where nothing remarkable ever happened since the landing of Julius Cæsar, and all that took place ten miles distant was absolutely unknown; thence she could transmit no journal but a table of the tides, or a register of the weather. For the journal that consists of facts must contain facts of great consequence. But in her quiet and obscure life she read, wrote, thought, and felt, and the whole wide creation was open to her observation.

Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of the Rev. Nicholas Carter, D.D., Perpetual Curate of the chapel that was erected in Deal when the church was found to be too small and distant. Dr. Carter was one of the six preachers in Canterbury Cathedral. At the age of ten she lost her mother, whose death was attributed to vexation at the loss of a handsome fortune she had brought her husband. The bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720 swept away the greater part of it, and the poor lady, who

had not the spirit to conquer fate, fell into a gradual decline.

A perfect knowledge of French, acquired at an early age from a Huguenot refugee minister at Canterbury, was the foundation of Elizabeth Carter's education; her father taught her, together with her brothers, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though the slowness of her apprehension tired out his patience. Italian, Spanish, and German she taught herself without any assistance, and later in life she set herself to learn Portuguese, but for want of books she made no great progress. Lastly, she taught herself Arabic, and made an Arabic Dictionary, containing various meanings of words which elsewhere had been improperly translated.

Louis XV., when his daughter's *lectrice* confessed to being only familiarly acquainted with two foreign languages, replied 'En voilà bien assez pour faire enrager un mari.' Elizabeth Carter, however, inflicted her learning on no man.

Youthful prodigies were not unknown or unapproved in the eighteenth century. Lord and Lady Grey's little girl, 'just turned five, had no joy but in books which she picked out for herself,' and her favourite read-

ing was Dr. Newton's 'Dissertation on the Prophecies.'

We also hear of a beautiful girl of eighteen who had written two plays, two novels, two sermons, and several poems, and was engaged in writing comments on the book of the Revelation, on which subject she was corresponding with a Dignitary of the Church.

Like Lord Macaulay, who acquired the gift of tongues by reading the Bible, Elizabeth Carter held that grammar ought to be a *consequence* of understanding a language rather than an aid to learning it. Grammar as a general science she understood well, but not as taught in schools, and though considered by Dr. Johnson to possess a more thorough knowledge of Greek than anyone he ever knew, she would contemptuously declare she had never learnt either Latin or Greek grammar. A short daily reading in each language enabled her to keep what she had acquired, but the penalty of such unwearied application during her early years was life-long suffering from severe headaches, and throughout her career 'her untoward head was mighty apt to frustrate many an honest intention of her heart.'

In spite of her father's protests, she con-

tracted a habit which she was never able to shake off, of taking snuff to keep herself awake during her midnight studies, and she used also to put a wet towel round her head, and chew green tea and coffee. But she soon found herself obliged to avoid all 'intemperance in Hebrew and Greek,' for if she did not content herself with a moderate degree of application (eight to twelve hours a day), her perverse temperament rendered her incapable of any application at all. However, an aching head proved an excellent antidote against a giddy one, and there was no fear of its being turned round like a whirligig by the perpetual motion of London life; it also made her very philosophical as to all vanities of a hat and feathers. Had many of the speakers in both Houses been similarly afflicted, she believed it would have greatly tended to the good order and quiet of the nation, but trembling nerves she found were a much greater bar to knowledge than the heaviest weight of dulness. When Dr. Johnson complained of tooth-ache a voluble Frenchman, regardless of probable cause and effect, exclaimed 'Ah, Monsieur, vous étudiez trop!'

At one time she made considerable pro-

gress in astronomy. A friend wrote to her:

'You have been so taken up with the stars that you forget us poor mortals here below. Your mind and body have quarrelled lately, and are separated—in plain English, your wits are gone a wool-gathering. Build no castles in the air, forsake your imaginary palace in the Milky Way, and bless us, your quondam friends, with your pleasant conversation.

'*P.S.*—A great many people here run mad.'

Her severe studies were varied by equally severe recreation, which she thus described:

'I have played the rake enormously these last two days, and sat up till near three in the morning. I walked three miles in a wind that I thought would have blown me out of this planet, danced nine hours, and then walked back again. I am not so devoted to these earthly entertainments but that I still retain a great regard to the stars.'

'Dancing,' she said, 'was not an argument of being either well or happy.' It seemed odd that, having thought of little but books at fifteen, she should at five-and-twenty run mad after balls and assemblies; however, she

declared she was too inconsistent in her follies to be long under the power of any one, and perhaps the next might be learning the Chinese language or studying Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas.

At the age of twenty-two Elizabeth Carter consulted a doctor, who gave her little hopes of 'a cure on this side of the grave,' alternate succession of ease and pain was all he could prophesy for her through life. She subsequently enjoyed nearly seventy years of vigorous health, that must have inclined her to distrust physicians who assume the rôle of a prophet.

She therefore was very careful of her health, and upon that principle 'exceedingly afraid of doctors;' of all considerations next to a good conscience, health, she said, was the most important, as the *sine qua non* not only of every comfort, but of all the active duties of life. For those who set out on a mad pursuit after knowledge, and think it possible to improve their understandings while they neglect their health, soon run themselves out of breath, and are stopped in the midst of their career, when a sober, moderate pace might have carried them securely to their point.

Instead of wearying herself, however, to acquire perfect health which was not in her power, she was thankful for the amount she enjoyed ; for the knowledge of what positive health meant, she was content to wait till some future state of being. In spite of an untoward constitution and youthful indiscretions, she was granted what she called the ' tremendous blessing ' of long life, and died in her eighty-ninth year.

She was always an early riser, and one summer that she was compelled to pass in the care of her health and the utter neglect of her intellect, she rode or walked out by the advice of her physician between four and five o'clock every morning.

When engaged in this eager and somewhat violent pursuit of health, she rambled at times to the top of a hill by moonlight, enjoying a superiority over the slumbering world with a sense of dignity in finding herself awake. After contemplating the still beauties of the landscape in the soft light of the moon, all the spirit and glory of the opening day enlivened her walk home, as the sun darted its full splendour on the waves. Dr. Johnson, one New Year's Day, made the heroic resolve to

rise in future about eight. In this he persevered until the following March, when he said that, though he had accomplished but little when he was up, he had obtained for so many more hours the 'consciousness of being.' Some may object that eight o'clock is not very early; to such he would answer, 'Why, sir, a London morning does not go with the sun.' Elizabeth Carter found something inexpressibly delightful in an autumn morning, when the elements seemed to be reposing after they had finished their work of distributing the blessings of heaven to the inhabitants of the earth.

When debarred from the delight of rambling alone by a set of 'rakish fellows' who infested the place, she chose a companion of Amazonian bravery who feared nothing but apparitions and frogs, from which she promised to secure her if she on her part would undertake to defend her from May-bugs and men, which she most dreaded; so by the strength of that alliance they both proceeded in great safety.

Without vanity, Elizabeth Carter claimed to be one of the best walkers in England, and her fellow-travellers followed her panting and grumbling at a considerable distance, climbing up the hill 'Difficulty,' till at length they sank

into the 'Slough of Despond.' One of her sisters declined to go with her until she had learnt to fly, and another of her followers sent word that she could not possibly venture any more, as her last walk had absolutely dislocated all her bones.

So she had no one to depend on but her half-sister Mary, who was as strong as a little Welsh horse, and trudged after her with great alacrity, promising never to forsake her, if she should walk to the North Pole. Those frightful insects May-bugs, which so greatly molested her walks in spring, were 'creatures with only one head, no feathers, but two wings, a good deal less than a crab, and not at all like it.' This very accurate description of her formidable enemies was at least as clear, she maintained, as many she had met with in books, and would enable the reader to form a very perfect idea of these insects, that devastate the flowery fields of Kent like the Northern army in Joel.

Elizabeth Carter describes the manner in which she continued to pass her days at Deal with little variety for nearly a century. 'As you desire a full and true account of my whole life and conversation, it is necessary in the first place that you should be made acquainted with

the singular contrivance by which I am called in the morning. There is a bell placed at the head of my bed, and to this is fastened a packthread and a piece of lead, which, when I am not lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane, is conveyed through a crevasse of my window into a garden below, pertaining to the sexton, who gets up between four and five and pulls the said packthread with as much heart and good will as if he were ringing my knell. Some evil-minded people have most wickedly threatened to cut my bell-rope, which would be the utter undoing of me, for I should infallibly sleep out the whole summer. And now I am up, you may inquire "To what purpose?" I sit down to my several lessons, as regular as a schoolboy, and lay in a stock of learning to make a figure with at breakfast.' Boswell relates that when the sexton failed she contrived that her chamber light should at a certain hour burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell 'with a strong, sudden noise' that roused her from her sleep.

'My general practice about six,' she continued, 'is to take up my stick and walk, sometimes alone, and at others with a companion whom I draw out half asleep and, con-

sequently, incapable of reflecting on the danger of such an undertaking; however, she has the extreme consolation of grumbling as much as she pleases without the least interruption, which she does with such a variety of comical phrases, that I generally laugh from the beginning to the end of our journey.

'Many are the exercises of patience she meets with: sometimes half-roasted upon an open common, then dragged through a path in the middle of a cornfield, bathed up to the ears in dew, and perhaps forced to scratch her way through bushes never before frequented by any animal but birds.

'In short, towards the conclusion of our walk, we make such deplorable ragged figures, that I wonder some prudent country justice does not take us up for vagrants, and cramp our rambling genius in the stocks; an apprehension that does not half so much fright me, as when some civil swains pull off their hats, and I hear them signify to one another, with a note of admiration, that I am Parson Carter's daughter. I had rather be accosted with "Good morrow, sweetheart! Are you walking for a wager?"

'When I have made myself fit to appear

among human creatures we go to breakfast, and we are extremely chatty; this and tea in the afternoon are the most sociable parts of the day.

'We have a great variety of topics, but whenever we get beyond Latin and French my sister and the rest walk off, and leave my father and me to finish the discourse and the tea-kettle by ourselves, which we should infallibly do if it held as much as Solomon's molten sea.'

Their discourse, like their correspondence, was probably often carried on in Latin. Many of their letters are dated 'Anno Mundi' instead of 'Anno Domini,' on the basis of the Julian chronology. A Xenophon of Elizabeth's, now in the possession of Mr. Brudenell Carter, is dated in her handwriting '6449.'

'After breakfast,' she continued, 'my first care is to water the pinks and roses, and when this task is finished I sit down to a spinnet, which in its best state might have cost about fifteen shillings, with as much importance as if I knew how to play. After deafening myself for about half an hour with all manner of noises, I proceed to some other amusement, and thus between reading, working, writing, twirling the globes, and running up and down stairs to see

where everybody is and how they do, I seldom want either business or entertainment.

'It is the fashion here for people to make such unreasonable long visits that before they are half over I grow so restless and corky that I am ready to fly out of the window. About eight I visit a very agreeable family, but always return precisely at ten, beyond which hour I do not desire to see the face of any living wight, and thus I finish my day and this tedious description.'

To a friend who did not share her taste for early rising she wrote the following verses :

'Of the many queer trifles my brains often hatch,
I've enclosed you a paper to put in your watch ;
'Tis designed from a true equinoctial projection,
Tho' belike 'tis not done to the greatest perfection ;
But 'twill show you (with many more curious devices)
When the sun goes to bed, and eke when he rises.
A thing of prodigious importance, you'll say,
To folks who ne'er see him except at mid-day.
Now I wonder, dear Hetty, a person of reason
Should not choose to enjoy each good thing in its season ;
And believe me, who commonly rise pretty soon,
There are many fine shows to be seen before noon.
The poets will tell you a deal of Aurora,
And how much she improves all the beauties of Flora
Tho' you need believe neither the poets nor me,
But convince your own senses, and get up and see.

I've considered your doubts of the ways and means how,
And will give you the very best council I know:
Even purchase a 'larum as loud as e'er squall'd,
And set but your hour, and you're sure to be called.'

Elizabeth Carter thus describes her accomplishments :—'My present reigning scheme is music. Having for some time past made a composition of noises between the hissing of a snake and the lowing of a cow upon a German flute, I am now set down to the spinnet, which unfortunately stood in my way, and before I can play three bars in any one tune, am trying at a dozen. I content myself with thinking it is a superficial world one lives in, and superficial understandings suit it best, so *vive la bagatelle*, I'll e'en trifle on and be content.'

Though these spasmodic efforts to make music failed, throughout life she loved the art, and enjoyed the works of Handel and Corelli beyond all others. 'Mr.' Handel's 'powerful magic' recalled to her thoughts fine passages from her favourite authors, striking conversations, and the memory of those she loved. 'Though he deserved to be maintained,' she doubted how long his oratorios, once so crowded, might be fashionable, for he played to empty walls in the opera house. It pained

her to notice amongst the most constant frequenters of his oratorios 'profligate poor wretches, who lived inharmonious and disorderly lives,' and she lamented to see 'a passionate love of music and the fine arts often united with a dissipated head and wicked heart.'

However, it was more fashionable to run mad about Mr. Thomson's play 'Tancred and Sigismunda,' to the success of which tragedy the acting of David Garrick and Mrs. Cibber no doubt contributed. It was written in 1748, the year of his death, by James Thomson, author of 'The Seasons,' the Roxburghshire poet, who was born at Ednam in 1700.

Of painting she wrote: 'I have lately taken great pains to acquire some little notion of this delightful art; but with such wretched success, that I begin to lose courage. I never had any instruction but from books as unintelligible to me as if they were written in the Calmuck language; I have nothing to assist me but industry; genius I have none, and I want mightily to know whether one can make any progress without it.'

She wrote to a friend: 'Pray can you knit? I have just taken it into my head to learn; I have taken incredible pains, and

observed as profound a silence as if I had entered myself a disciple in the school of Pythagoras, to the great offence of Mrs. Underdown, who insists that knitters are as bad company as smokers, and observing that I felt somewhat vain of my proficiency in finishing a round in somewhat less than an hour, has endeavoured to mortify my vanity by telling me that, notwithstanding all my efforts, I am blundering at an art in which I shall be excelled by every goody in the parish.'

To Elizabeth Carter's active mind the monotonous drudgery of learning to knit appeared likely to qualify her for that earliest of philosophical schools, 'which was one of moral abstinence and purification.' Pythagoras, the founder, attached great importance to mathematical studies, and while counting her stitches, she, too, probably found that numbers are the principles of all things; she hoped, no doubt, that her work would eventually become like the universe according to the doctrines of Pythagoras, a harmonious whole (Kosmos), though the object attained after finishing a round in somewhat less than an hour might appear, like the ultimate aim of his philosophical school, to be wrapped in mystery.

The traditional gypsy woman has always been represented with a pipe in her mouth, but of smoking amongst educated English women of the eighteenth century there does not appear to be any record, although they were not averse to a pinch of snuff. Had Dr. Johnson foreseen the present necessity of a cigarette to soothe the overwrought feminine nerves, he would not have so hastily condemned knitting as the nearest approach to idleness. John Bright used to testify from his own experience to the calming power of this mechanical work, to which he had recourse when harassed with the affairs of the State, and which to the habitual knitter requires no effort of the brain.

Elizabeth Carter had also been greatly engaged in the 'important affair of working a pair of ruffles' and handkerchief, and though her friends highly applauded such laudable imitation of the quiet domestic virtues of our great-grandmothers as working in muslin and lawn, they thought it would be an unpardonable sacrifice in those capable of employing their eyes so much better.

Recognising his daughter's unusual abilities, the worthy and learned Dr. Carter desired her to qualify herself by the study of German for

a place about the Court. Though the narrow circle which bounds the views of a mere courtier would have been very uncongenial, her pen would probably have produced pictures of the household of the Princess of Wales (mother of George III.) as vivid as those in Fanny Burney's Diary, which have made good King George and his worthy Queen real and living persons for us.

She might also have influenced that unhappy Princess Caroline Matilda, afterwards Queen of Denmark, who wanted nothing but a blameless life to have been accounted one of the noble army of martyrs. The King of Denmark thus excused his cruel conduct to his wife. He wrote to George III. that his sister had behaved in a manner that had obliged him to imprison her, *but that from regard for his Majesty her life should be safe.*

Elizabeth Carter had heard with sympathetic interest how this poor child, as she then was, had gone out alone into the wide world, not a creature that she knew attending her farther than Altona. It was worse than dying, for it was dying out of one bad world into another, where she would have cares, and fears, and dangers, and sorrows that were yet all new to her.

Contented as Elizabeth Carter was with her manner of life, other people did not seem to think it a life to be contented with. A good old gentleman had proposed a variety of schemes, which, though they might be very advantageous, presented no attractions to her. To give up one's ease and liberty, and to be under perpetual restraint for the sake of wearing a finer gown, eating a greater variety of dishes, and seeing more company and fewer friends, appeared to her a very strange scheme ; and moreover, unless it were to instruct the young Princesses in Latin and Greek, which since the days of Queen Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey had never been thought of, she could not imagine for what important function she was designed.

The night before receiving a letter suggesting her appointment to a post in the Princess of Wales's household, she dreamed that for the greater convenience of curling her hair she had cut off her head : which she considered marvellously applicable—for what was going to Court but setting one's cap handsomely at the expense of losing one's head ?

Few people were more attentive to the subject of Court Intelligence than Elizabeth Carter ; for those engaged in the bustle and

shifting scenes of Court life have very little leisure to attend to the spectacle from which quiet observers, who content themselves with seeing the drama without any wish for the pleasures and tinsel, and the long trains of the actors, derive so much amusement. She willingly adopted the following advice from her father: 'Preserve the character of an inoffensive and prudent woman, take extreme caution concerning the company you keep, be civil to all, not too intimate with any, and very reserved with some, and your extraordinary qualifications will in time produce something desirable.'

Like Maria Edgeworth, who cheerfully welcomed a perpetual succession of stepmothers, Elizabeth Carter lived on very happy terms with her father's second wife, a woman of good heart and useful life, whose devotion to her husband was not of that narrow and selfish kind that seeks to alienate a man from his own children. She was one with him in the loyal discharge of his duty to those who had a prior claim. She was not a woman of strong nerve. An unexpected offer of marriage for her stepdaughter Elizabeth 'quite scared her,' and when it was rumoured that the French fleet

was about to land 12,000 troops at Deal, she 'gaped,' whilst her husband merely looked profound. Fear equally revealed the characters of the servants. Polly secured her money, and Betty wrung her hands, lifted up her eyes and roared most wonderfully. At the time of this good woman's death, Elizabeth Carter wrote: 'A few hours after my arrival at Lambeth I received the sad news of the death of my mother; she was no otherwise related to me than by marrying my father, but her uncommon care of his family rendered her a most valuable blessing to us all. After her laborious cares, I hoped she would have enjoyed relaxation and ease, and that by my attentions I should contribute to her happiness. How shall I miss her kind indulgence, her tender concern for my health, her constant watchful care of me, and the particular assistance she was always ready to give!'

Dr. Johnson marvelled when he heard that Hannah More and her four sisters lived happily together; but *they* kept a school—five unemployed women living harmoniously in one house might have aroused his incredulity.

Be it remembered to the credit of 'bluestockings,' often exposed to ridicule by the

uncouth appearance of those who cultivate their minds, that two such distinguished literary women as Elizabeth Carter and Maria Edgeworth shone conspicuously in their home duties and the complication of step-relationships.

Elizabeth Carter entirely undertook the education of her half-brother Henry (who was twenty-one years her junior), from whom she was inseparable. A friend wrote to her: 'Do not get into such idle Mama-panics about "your son Henry," because panics are endless, and make reasonable people silly, and happy people miserable.'

Much contrivance was necessary to find employment for this lively boy; 'he skipped, danced, and played all manner of monkey tricks,' which she never checked, but racked her brain to amuse him, allowing him the use of every picture book in her cupboard, and permission to stun her head by playing with his tops and whips in her chamber; but of all this he soon tired. At length, anticipating the 'kindergarten' scheme of after generations, she hit upon a lucky expedient by setting him to draw perpendiculars and triangles. A scale and compasses kept him as quiet and as well pleased as heart could wish.

She considered it her duty to contribute to the cheerfulness of her family society, and said if people would recollect what they do *not* suffer it would alleviate the sense of what they do.

'My nerves,' she wrote, 'are in a wretched state and my spirits fluttering and low. Very well, but I am not blind, nor in prison, nor among heathen, nor betrayed by friends. As it is a duty to feel for the sorrows of all, so it is equally one to enjoy with cheerful thankfulness one's own blessings.' She had learned from Epictetus that 'If man is unhappy, his unhappiness is his own fault, for God has made all men to be happy and free from perturbations. We sit trembling for fear that something *will* happen, and weeping, lamenting, and groaning for what *does* happen, and yet God, like a true Father, has given us faculties to bear with greatness of soul and manliness everything that happens without being depressed or broken by it.'

She had nevertheless her seasons of depression. In 1745 she wrote to a friend:

'Such is the present state of things I must visit you in sackcloth and ashes, as the habit best suited to the now disposition of my mind. Indeed one would not imagine it from the

lively colours in which I appear to everybody else. To look gay when one is really unhappy is a duty society has a right to demand, but I have a higher opinion of you than of anybody else, therefore choose to appear before you without disguise.

'I do not know I was ever so perfectly out of humour with the world, and all in it, as I am at present, a very unpleasant reverse of my usual error in liking it perhaps better than it deserves. Everything now looks joyless and uncomfortable. There is neither light in the sun nor verdure in the fields, nor cheerfulness in any human face. I am sick of people of sense because they can act like fools, and of fools because they cannot talk like people of sense, and of myself for being so absurd as to trouble my head about them. There is a strange kind of magic in some circumstances that can thus alter the whole face of things. A little while ago I was mightily disposed to be pleased with all I met with, and now I am pleased with nothing.

''Tis surely a fatal error to give oneself up to certain enchantments that lead the mind into fairy regions of dreams and shadows, where it is amused and fixed on imaginary forms of

happiness and perfection, which vanish with the fickle cause that gave them being, and one is left in the midst of a wild, perplexed solitude, astonished and utterly at a loss what road to take or where to meet with any object to divert it. What a figure I must appear to you! I am ashamed but not sorry, as it begins to do me a great deal of good; the picture I have been drawing of myself is so deformed that it quite shocks me. Surely conversing with you has a wonderful power of harmonising my thoughts, for I find myself getting into good temper apace—*Me voici donc passablement gai, le monde se repeuple et tout va assez bien.* I'll e'en put on my Venetian cap, stick a great sunflower in my bosom, look very fine, laugh, and be as well pleased with people and things as I used to be.'

Elizabeth Carter's advice to whoever will apply it to herself:

'Madam,—Are you young? Then be wise and be a wonder. Are you old? Be cheerfully prudent and decently agreeable; as for your opinions, be consistent in all and obstinate in none, and rejoice that you are got so far in safety through a dangerous world. Are you naturally gay? Why, then, never go out of

your way to seek for pleasure, and you will constantly enjoy it. Are you serious? Remember that not to be happy is not to be grateful. Are you melancholy? Beware of romance. Are you handsome? Be unaffected, and charm, like Lady C——. Are you plain? Be easy, and outshine all beauty. Are you rich? Make use of your fortune with a generous economy; beware equally of trifling and indolence; keep your money out of a purse and a toy shop; make other people happy and yourself considerable. Do you want employment? Choose it well before you begin, and then pursue it. Do you want amusement? Take the first you meet with that is harmless, and never be attached to any. Are you in a moderate station? Be content, though not affectedly so; be philosophical, but for the most part keep your thoughts to yourself. Are you sleepy? Go to bed.'

CHAPTER II

DEAL

The spot on earth where one dwells may be nothing or may be a great deal. Elizabeth Carter thought her abode the most charming she had ever seen. The stormy ocean, hanging cliffs, and rocky shore formed a fine contrast to the 'cultivated, sociable, and good-humoured country' that lay between Deal and Canterbury. From the gentle beauties of the landscape the mind turned to the vast, wild, awful works created by the Almighty hand, and untouched by human littleness. 'Man,' said Epictetus, 'is a witness summoned by God not only to be a spectator, but an interpreter of His works, and he bids us to take care not to die without having seen them.'

'What have I done to you, and what has poor Kent done to you,' wrote Elizabeth Carter, 'that in your direction you stick us in the

mire of Sussex, when we are in reality so happy as to be placed on the coast of Kent?'

There summer might be seen in all its charms, the sun shining bright and warm by day, and the moon shedding a soft light and cool freshness over the evening, so that the fields did 'laugh and sing.' Yet very fine weather was so transitory a good in that uncertain sky that Mrs. Carter found there was no great hope that it would wait till she had more leisure to attend to it.

On the 1st of June poor mortals on the Kentish coast might be petrified with cold winds, or on Midsummer Day alternately scorched and frozen by a hot sun and cold north-east wind; but in all weathers she had the resolution to ramble in the fields, although she had rather be loitering over a book, from a conviction that any kind of weather is more wholesome than too much Greek. Whenever she tired of reading, her garden amused and occupied her, even when the effects of a long succession of north-east winds were shown in the shabby, drooping appearance of her flowers. Watering and planting were her great resource. Elizabeth Carter loved her birthplace, as the

DEAL

From an engraving after a painting by J. W. M. Turner, R.A.

'frozen Russian prefers his interminable wastes of snow to the citron groves and spicy fragrance of Arabia.' During nearly a century Deal was her home, though the winter storms made fearful havoc of her aching head. She could not put her nose out of doors without securing her cap and bonnet in a 'very powerful manner' with the largest pins she could find to avoid the awkward distress of having them blown to the Goodwin Sands.

From her window, which looked towards the North Foreland, she enjoyed a view of the sea of which she never wearied. Every hour it wore some new appearance. Sometimes a dark cloud, illuminated by a rainbow, overshadowed part of the ocean, while over the other the setting sun was shining on the sails of the ships, forming a variety of the most sublime and inconceivable beauty. At one moment it displayed all the grandeur of a storm, the waves of the Goodwin Sands dashing against the clouds, or when the storm had spent its fury from all points of the compass it would settle into a calm. The Greeks had an epithet for the sea, which interpreters translate unfruitful, because, say they, the sea does not produce any vineyards. Now the same word,

Elizabeth Carter declared, by another derivation signifies 'unwearied,' and 'indefatigable, and forms an epithet of the highest propriety and beauty.

Sometimes she would take solitary moonlight walks on the beach, indulging her melancholy thoughts by a view of the ocean that had separated her from a favourite brother, a lieutenant in the Navy, who died on foreign service; at others, she would sit on the shore surveying the dashing waves, or in her airy little room, listening to the howling wind, beating rain, and roaring billows. Fond as she was of the sea, her house was too much like the Eddystone, and her rooms (which were smaller than she could wish) were in everything but motion absolute cabins. But, then, it was in such a situation that even her intemperate love of air had enough to content it. She always called it the 'Vinegar Bottle,' probably alluding to its shape. She considered a high hill, where one is solidly fixed and surrounded by the free air of heaven, a good station; but to be suspended between earth and sky, and enclosed in walls of brick and stone, as in the 'flatts' in Edinburgh, was a most fearful *séjour*; it reminded her of the 'old

woman who was drawn up in a basket three or four leagues as high as the moon.'

Mrs. Montagu gladly left the magnificence of her palace in Portman Square and the Gothic beauties of Sandleford, and Mrs. Vesey deserted her blue room in Bolton Street or her Irish home full of mortal comforts and conveniences, to visit their friend in her 'Vinegar Bottle.' Mrs. Carter's only attendants were two damsels, who on one occasion during her absence had behaved so wickedly that she endeavoured to replace them by two others, who knew no earthly thing save how to speak the truth and do as they were bid. One such prize she quickly found, and when another equally ignorant was secured, she was constantly employed, first in teaching herself, and next in teaching them the art and mystery of their business; for they, poor souls, would have run their noses against every door in that intricate little tenement without knowing whither it would lead, if she had not served them as guide. Whether they would get acquainted with the odd ways of their mistress she could not tell, but she was not discouraged by any former want of success; for trial is always a duty, and with success she had nothing to do.

Locks and bolts she always looked upon as the most severe satire upon mankind. Elizabeth Carter was not amongst those who

'Prepare a home from which to run away.'

To the indolence of her temper a journey of sixteen miles seemed as formidable as a voyage to 'Grand Cairo,' and that distance placed her friends as completely out of her reach as if they were perched on the farthest point of the Orkneys. With the coaches and chariots of this world she had nothing to do, and her knowledge of riding was so slight that she would as soon think of flying through the air on the back of a hippogriff (the winged horse of Ariosto). She told a calamitous story of how she had ridden out one evening to take the air with a friend, when her friend's horse started and threw her. 'But as the creature happened to have no legs it was pretty near the ground, and she received little damage except the breaking of a little glass bottle in her pocket, which she feared might put out her eyes.' In 1744 she described herself as having become so extremely plodding and stupid, that she feared all her gay, whimsical ideas would dwindle into a sober relish for

a comfortable life, and instead of soaring in the air as volatile as a skylark, she expected to be soon reduced to waddling upon earth like a fat goose. In the spring the usual flight of Kentish people to London depopulated the county, and when her own wings were clipped, she found it melancholy to sit listening to the roaring of the waves and the horrible howling of the north-east wind. But she was well adapted for solitude, for she possessed a genius for 'castle building' that would have afforded her many happy hours if she had been banished to the Orcades.

Her situation at this period resembled that of poor Hero; and, warned by her fate, a friend wrote: 'Do not expect a Leander from the opposite coast, but rather return to London, and when he is found may he be equally faithful and more happy.'

Her friends at Deal knew nothing of the larger world in which Elizabeth Carter shone as a prominent member of the most exclusive literary society; they were indifferent to everything outside their own narrow circle, and could only imagine her as taking part in their local society, and joining their parties of whist and quadrille. As no one there thought either better

or worse of her for her attainments, she contrived to live happily without 'spirit, taste, or sentiment,' or a hundred other fine things which her blue-stocking friends in town reckoned among the necessaries of life.

When engaged for the afternoon with a party of 'vociferous fat gentlewomen' at fancy quadrille, she could with great tranquillity make tea for them, and quietly withdraw her thoughts to a more amusing entertainment than their comments on the black aces, voles, sanprendres, &c., &c. She had enough common sense to keep in good humour through the daily round, and to prevent her from running the needle into her fingers when she was at work. She found the good men and women with whom she was associated as unentertaining as dormice, yet as they bore the figure of human creatures, and might be, for aught she knew, of more use in society than herself, she did not feel at liberty to shock their ideas of good manners by drawing a book out of her pocket. She comforted herself with the thought that they would soon betake themselves to their black aces, and though she might be stifled with the heat, she would not be obliged to talk. Of all the teasing exercises of the

spirits, she found few so wearying as that of mere mechanical, uninteresting talking, unless looked upon as a wholesome mortification. She had a 'laudable affection for conversation,' but mortally hated talking. A long walk was required to give her spirit to pay a visit to two or three of the Deal 'misses.' 'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' she would cry, 'how can I contrive to make talk?' The gossip in a country town like Deal made novel-reading unnecessary, for the scandal gleaned from a few of these visits supplied all the plots of the ordinary novel, with the advantage of freshness and originality. She consoled herself with the reflection that perpetual intellectual pleasures might in our present imperfect state withdraw us from our duties, and weaken our human sympathies. Neither her intellectual powers nor futile efforts to make small talk were always required to enliven these ceremonies, for with a very aching head she paid a visit where her hostess talked very loud, the parrot screamed, the lap-dog barked, the child cried, and the maid, to quiet all this *tintamarre* blew a horn.

The less pretentious of her townsfolk were quicker to recognise her talents, and were

21139

proud of the distinction they reflected on their locality.

'Why, Punch,' said the showman of a puppet-show at Deal, 'what makes you so stupid?'

'I can't talk my own talk,' answered Punch; 'the famous Miss Carter is here.'

The inhabitants of Deal were amply satisfied with all that pertained to themselves; they had an excellent set of actors, that wanted very few qualifications but washing their faces and learning to read; and as to the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, Mrs. Carter exclaimed: 'We have such a very fine psalm singing here at present, that we would hardly condescend to listen to any music but our own.'

Occasionally foreign talent was exhibited. Monsieur Blanchard fixed on a spot on the South Foreland, whence he proposed to begin a flight to Calais in his balloon. This attempt Mrs. Carter viewed with great distrust, for she supposed that the principles upon which a post-chaise moves upon earth are equally secure, and yet some chance might overturn it, and 'non déplaise à Monsieur Blanchard, a tumble from the clouds is rather more formidable than the breaking of a wheel or an axle on a turnpike road.'

The 'Gentleman's Magazine' gives a 'particular account of a voyage in a grand balloon, in the atmosphere, from Dover Castle to France, by those skilful and enterprising philosophers Messrs. Blanchard and Jeffries,' and from this we learn that, after waiting at Dover from December 25, 1784, for a favourable gale to reach the Continent, they determined on Friday morning, January 7, 1785, to prepare for their voyage, the sky being clear, the weather moderate, and the wind N.N.W. At eight o'clock the signal gun was fired, the flag hoisted at the Castle, and soon after twelve the ascent, which was successful in every way, took place. Although the aeronauts had to throw out all their ballast and gear, and finally cut away the car itself in order to escape falling into the Channel, at three o'clock they 'entered France,' and descended at a point just twelve miles from the coast. Some years later, when the French proposed transporting an army of invasion across the Channel in 1797 by means of balloons, Mrs. Carter sarcastically remarked: 'Surely they must have great confidence in the friendship of the "Prince of the power of the air."'

The good people of Deal contented them-

selves with plain practical sins, such as smuggling, and never troubled their heads about speculative refinements upon wickedness. Mrs. Carter heartily wished that all books that taught people to be wicked under colour of argument and principle were publicly burnt at Tyburn.

'Our great people,' she wrote, 'break through all the sacred authority of law, and lose all sense of what is decent in pursuit of French diversions, and are surrounded by French tailors, French valets, French dancing masters, and French cooks. Our fine ladies disgrace the "human shape divine," and become helpless to themselves and troublesome to all the world besides, with French hoops, and run into indecent extravagance of dress, inconsistent with all rules of sober appearance and good economy. Little people always follow the example of their superiors, and we misses in the country have our heads equally turned with French fashions and French fooleries, which makes us break the law, and smuggle for the sake of getting French finery.'

In this description she hardly does herself justice, for she had never squandered her money on blonds and gauzes.

Mrs. Carter was no free trader. Smuggling was a subject on which she felt strongly, and she was always willing to assist her suffering, misled neighbours by any means in her power. It hurt her to see the carriages of people of the first rank in the kingdom leave Deal laden with every article of contraband goods, and she was indignant that the rich and great should avail themselves with impunity of the frauds which caused these poor, miserable people to be brought to ruin, and entailed a fearful sacrifice of life, for this infamous trade indirectly contributed to many murders. The insolence of the smugglers was no doubt very great, as their trade was encouraged by those who both made the laws and broke them; but there were sad devastations amongst them, and the seizures, like their gains, were immense. They reckoned that if they saved one boat out of three they were quits, which showed the amount of their profits.

Colonel Thomas Best, of Chilston Park and Cowling Castle, Kent, M.P. for Canterbury, and Governor of Dover Castle, was amongst Elizabeth Carter's friends and neighbours. His nephew, Thomas Best, lived at Boxley, near Maidstone, on the direct road between Deal and London. At dead of night

his slumbers were occasionally disturbed by sounds, the cause of which he suspected, and perhaps did not wholly condemn. On opening the window to make a faint protest, he received the invariable reply, 'Good night, Squire; it's all right, we'll shut the gates!' with which explanation he had perforce to content himself, though he knew full well that twenty stalls in his stables would that night be vacant, and that all the servants, grooms, gardeners, stablemen, and labourers were out on the same errand. Even the outrider who preceded the family coach and four with a large lamp strapped to his waist in front, when they dined out, and was called 'the Moon,' would at that moment be lighting the smugglers through the green lanes that then did duty for roads. In Boxley Woods contraband articles were temporarily hidden, and removed when convenient to a neighbouring well, where they could be safely stowed away in a chamber twenty feet below the surface of the ground, of sufficient size in which to turn a coach and four. There they awaited removal by other willing helpers from a neighbouring parish, and in this manner eventually reached their destination. Though murders and hangings must occasionally result

when thieves fall out, in the main the whole country side worked harmoniously together, with a right good will and common purpose, and were all ready to join the gay throng not only for the greed of gain, but the love of sport.

These tales of bygone days are recounted by Thomas Best's grandson, Major Mawdistly Gaussen Best, who also declares that his wife's ancestor, Sir William Brockman, of Beechborough, was placed in rather an equivocal position by the untimely leakage of a keg of brandy just as his carriage was crossing Rochester Bridge. It had been stowed away ostensibly by the servants, in the sword case at the back of the carriage, and covered with a hanging cushion against which the passengers rested. If they should be attacked by highwaymen the cushion would be removed, and the swords pulled out at a moment's notice.

From the same source a tradition is handed down directly of the origin of the word 'grog.' Admiral Vernon, of Nacton, Suffolk, and M.P. for Ipswich, who took Portobello with six ships of the line on November 22, 1739, married Sarah Best, of Boxley. He is described by his relative as an obstinate old fellow, who bullied the naval authorities. When his men were out

of beer he substituted rum and water, to which the men promptly gave the name of 'grog' in compliment to the old suit of grogram that the Admiral invariably wore. His monument in Westminster Abbey was erected by his uncle, Lord Orwell.

Deal had become an important place about the beginning of the eighteenth century. It possessed three streets running parallel to the sea, but until 1790 it was neither paved, lighted, nor cleaned. The inhabitants were seafaring men, and many of them smugglers. The sea immediately opposite the town affords a protected anchorage, about eight miles long and six broad, called the Downs, and was the rendezvous for the East India Fleet and other shipping; sometimes nearly 400 sail were safely riding there. The Goodwin Sands form the southern boundary of the Downs, and extend about ten miles, almost from Ramsgate to Kingsdown. In stormy weather, when the waves break over them with violence, they are a source of great danger to ships coming from the East. At low water, people frequently land on them, but when the tide begins to flow the sand becomes soft and quick, and the largest vessel driven upon them is quickly swallowed up.

A set of brave and experienced seamen, called 'hovellers,' assisted ships in distress, and were the means of rescuing thousands of lives.

William Falconer, in the first canto of his poem, 'The Shipwreck,' dedicated in 1762 to Edward, Duke of York, describes the skill and intrepidity of these brave men ; whose exploits were often varied by acts of extortion and plunder.

In 1799 Deal was in a great bustle with the embarkation of troops for Holland. The 'hovellers' volunteered their services for carrying not only the men, but their baggage, on board, and though their impedimenta appeared to Elizabeth Carter sufficient for an army like that of Xerxes, they transported it in safety with surprising despatch. They patriotically refused any reward from Government, in spite of the 'amazing fatigue' they had endured. As the troops and baggage-waggons passed Mrs. Carter's door, she saw with satisfaction that the bulk was increased by beds slung like hammocks, so that the soldiers would not be obliged to lie on the damp ground. The Duke of York gave the men, in whose boat he went off, ten guineas.

Elizabeth Carter's parcels were conveyed

from London in a Sandwich 'hoy,' which was a barge with one deck and one mast, something between a boat and a ship. In the 'Fairy Queen' we read of the arrival of three 'hoys' of Saxons. Though goods had never been known to miscarry, it 'was proper' to require the master's name. From Sandwich to Deal they were forwarded once a week by a carrier.

With regard to the origin of the Goodwin Sands, tradition asserts that during the reign of William Rufus an island belonging to the great Earl Godwin was suddenly submerged as a mark of Divine displeasure.

Lesser upheavals caused by internal dissensions disturbed the peace of this quiet little town at a later period.

Dr. Carter incurred the severe displeasure of his congregation by refusing to read the Athanasian Creed, so, in order to appease their wrath, his brother gave him 1,000*l.* wherewith to keep a curate to read it for him.

A friend wrote a satirical letter to the 'Mayor and Corporation of Deal,' congratulating them on the step they had taken in 'presenting their Minister in the Spiritual Court for omitting to read that antient and venerable part of our Liturgy. The laudable zeal they

had shown for the purity of the Catholic Faith would transmit their memories with a sweet-smelling savour to the latest posterity. It would be said that when orthodoxy was retiring from the innermost parts of the land, the men of Deale arrested her flight, and detained her for a while on the borders of the sea.' After a learned theological disquisition, the writer concludes: ''Tis possible you may suspect I have been talking to you hitherto in a bantering and sarcastic strain. I am really very much in earnest when I ask whether you can approve the severe treatment that Dr. Carter has received? Allowing that you have fallen into a squabble with him about the weighty matter of a parish clerk, could you settle the dispute no otherwise than by driving him to keep a curate? You bear testimony to the honesty of his character at the same time that you hurt his fortune. You must know him to be a man above prevarication, who would not outwardly assent to what he could not approve. I hope that now the Doctor is a declared heretic, you are so consistent as to avoid all manner of conversation with him; nay, I can hardly think it quite safe for you to hold any correspondence with his most ingenious and amiable daughter,

the young lady being, I fear, a little infected with her father's pestilential principles. Pray keep your own wives and daughters, yea, and your sons too, out of her way, or very fatal may be the consequences. Whether in the course of your trading with the opposite Continent, you have never smuggled one cargo of French principles, you yourselves best know. If such is the case, it will surely be the wisest way to confine your dealings for the future to brandy, wine, tea, gold and silver lace, and not to meddle with goods so little suited to a Protestant Constitution.'

Mrs. Carter wrote from these regions of discord, where the sun rose and set in a quarrel, expressing a wish to enter into acquaintance with the fishes, for fishes, good creatures, are mute. This mighty commotion made her even perpetrate an Irish bull, for she exclaimed: 'Do not dissuade me, for I am quite determined, if ever I keep a lapdog, or a monkey, it shall be a fish.' She trusted less to 'time and chance which happens to all,' than to the disposal of Providence, which often by unexpected methods calms the tumult of human passions. She sometimes walked to Kingsdown, a small fishing village, where the good

folks had not even heard (happy people!) that the clerk of Deal Chapel was dead. The kind of reading she most wanted to see was a 'subpœna' to summon her out of this uproar, where she was driven about by storms of commotion. She agreed with Shenstone that 'no one should destroy an insect or quarrel with a dog without a reason sufficient to vindicate it through all the Courts of Morality.'

The building of Deal Chapel, of which Dr. Carter was perpetual curate, was commenced in 1707. The parish church was one mile inland, and did not suffice for the accommodation of the increasing population of Lower Deal, so a brick building, with a roof of curiously framed timber-work, wholly supported on the side walls, was erected. The total cost, including the inclosing of two acres of burial ground, of 2,554*l.* 12*s.* $4\frac{3}{4}$*d.*, could not be defrayed by subscriptions, so an Act of Parliament was obtained in 1712 by which a duty of two shillings was laid upon every ton of coals brought into the town till May 1, 1727, to be applied to the building and adorning of the said chapel.

Elizabeth Carter frequently paid long visits

to Canterbury, and from thence gave graphic descriptions of life in a country town during the eighteenth century. With regard to everything external she found it a most agreeable situation. Every morning she was serenaded by a concert of rooks lodged in the elms at a little distance from the window, and 'Oh, enchanting sound! she heard the owl.' All looked so like the country that she was apt to think herself in a village. The venerable ruins of the old Castle, and their desolate buildings overgrown with moss and ivy, added greatly to the beauty of the poetical surroundings. A little antique tower that had sustained the silent batteries of time through a long course of centuries, would be a fitting place to converse with the dead, for there would be little fear of interruption from the living. The fine warm weather enjoyed at Canterbury would be great news to anybody at Deal, where in April the thermometer must be many degrees below extreme cold. The town was by no means always in repose, as from the foregoing description might be supposed—there were assemblies, charades, and lampoons.

The game of 'Push Pin,' in which Mrs. Carter delighted, was introduced into the

assemblies as a variety from dancing, to the great annoyance of 'all the smart squires in the county,' who, doubtless, thought it beneath the dignity of territorial magnates. When there was no 'Push Pin' going forward, Mrs. Carter was heartily fatigued, sitting in dismal solitude till three in the morning. When asked if it was true that her London friends had expressed surprise at 'Push Pin' being played at the Canterbury assemblies, she answered 'No, but I am informed that it is publicly talked of in the drawing-room at Madrid, and that the Queen of Spain thinks it very odd.' Though the dignity of 'the assembly' was a source of great amusement to her, she did not wish to affront the company, against whom she bore no malice, and wondered if any of her friends had heard rumours of her 'trundling a hoop in the cloisters.' This might escape censure, as it was no affront to the assembly, but she was told it was 'very near as bad,' as it would be an affront to the Church.

Canterbury society suddenly became possessed of 'the spirit of tragic fury,' and gave a representation of 'The Royal Convert,' in which Elizabeth Carter played the part of Hengist. All the actors came off with flying colours,

although they had never rehearsed it but once, for whenever they met for that purpose, they had so much to say to themselves in plain English that they could not confine themselves to talking in buskins. They feared they might be lampooned, for there was a lampoon going about in Canterbury, that some attributed to an officer in the Army, and others to a gentleman in the Navy; while a third party complimented Elizabeth Carter. However, a fourth denied her the honour, or in any case were positive that she had been assisted to a very considerable extent. The true author must have laughed at these profound conjectures. As Canterbury had conferred the dignities of author and satirist upon her, Elizabeth Carter warned her friends that it would be dangerous to offend her, as she might make good the accusation by beginning to lampoon them. It was the best time in the world to turn author, for the spirit of scribbling was extremely powerful, and verses swarmed during the warm weather in great abundance, and with as striking effect as gnats. As she had become so great a critic, her friends would find her lying in wait to catch their harmless syllables as spiders do flies.

Elizabeth Carter lived to see great changes in the neighbourhood of Deal. She remembered a house that contained noble rooms, a cedar gallery with striking air of sombre greatness, magnificent chimney-pieces, a chapel which she had seen gilded by the rays of the setting sun, and a pavilion fronted by a marble colonnade, which looked upon a garden that reminded her of the groves of Babylon. This estate was divided, the building sold for the material, and for the most part levelled to the ground. A noble old seat *en décadence* impressed her most painfully, even if its downfall were unconnected with guilt. It showed how little the objects which formed the pride and pleasure of one generation influence the fickle taste of the next. But she rejoiced to think the destructive folly of man has no power over the works of God. 'People who have so little taste or feeling,' she said, 'as to show no respect for the abode of their ancestors seem to be singularly careless of everything prior to their own individual selves. When a fair inheritance is transmitted to a family, they ought to feel a certain degree of tenderness for the abode of the ancestors from whom it is derived.'

An absolute ruin, though a melancholy object, may, however, soothe the imagination by the idea of repose; and, while it proves the weakness and littleness of all that is great below, and the overthrow of human art and magnificence, it causes us to look through the desolations of time to our own eternity. Were it not for the certainty of immortality the sight of a ruin would only inspire a feeling of gloom and horror.

The mansion of Northbourne Court had been granted to Sir Edwin Sandys, son of the Archbishop of York, by James I. Colonel Edwin Sandys was, however, fighting with Cromwell's army at the battle of Worcester when he received the wounds of which he died at Northbourne. His grandson, Sir Richard Sandys, left the property to his four daughters, who sold it. The house was pulled down, and only the walls, that formed a very considerable ruin, remained of the once large and stately building.

Sir Egerton Bridges, a Kentish baronet and man of letters, claimant of the barony of Chandos of Sudeley, and editor of the 'Censura Literaria' and 'Collins' Peerage of England,' describes in his autobiography the prevailing

characteristics of the county society during the eighteenth century, which, like that of every neighbourhood, varied according to the tone given to it by a few conspicuous personalities.

In earlier days, Kent produced Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet and statesman in the reign of Henry VIII., whose son was beheaded as a leader of the rebellion against Queen Mary; Lord Buckhurst; Sir Philip Sidney, the gallant and accomplished soldier and poet, and his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham; during the reign of Charles I., Sir Dudley Digges, whom 'y^e^ most knowing of Princes King James sent as Embassador to y^e^ Emperour of Russia,' Sir Edwin Sandys, Sir Roger Twisden, the scholar and historian, and Sir Edward Dering, who founded the library at Surrendar Dering. But, at the time of which Sir Egerton Bridges wrote, unintelligent squires ruled the day. Their talk he could not bear, but he admits he acted upon them as a wet sheet, for they suspected that he had ridiculed them in his novel 'Arthur Fitzalbini.' One of the Knatchbulls, it is true, was an author, but no one had ever heard of a Honywood having written a book. Unlike Job, who longed that his enemy might commit himself by rashly attempting to

write a book, Sir Egerton Bridges apparently thought it detracted from the esteem in which the Honywoods had been held in Kent since the reign of Henry III. that no member of the family had tried his hand at the making of books. The Furnesses of Waldershare raised themselves by smuggling, and enriched Lord Guildford, Sir Edward Dering, and Lord Bolingbroke. Catherine, the last representative of the Furness family, married first, Lewis, Earl of Rockingham, and secondly, Francis, Earl of Guildford. She died without issue and bequeathed her estate to her second husband. Lord Cowper, with his pack of hounds, was popular at the Moat, until the Corporation of Canterbury, within whose bounds the manor was situated, insisted that he should employ no workmen in the rebuilding of his house but such as were freemen of the city. He consequently made his home in Hertfordshire, and the Moat was pulled down. Nothing remains but a farmhouse and part of the old dog-kennel. Lord Rockingham, the second Marquis, who was Prime Minister in 1765, was well esteemed at Lee's Court. But those who possessed talents were rarely seen. Mr. Robinson, afterwards Lord Rokeby, brother of Mrs. Montagu,

'Queen of the Blues,' on retiring from Parliament, secluded himself at Horton, near Hythe. Old John Lewis pursued his antiquarianism at the little fishing village of Margate, of which he was vicar, while Dr. Brook Taylor, LL.D. and F.R.S., indulged his philosophical genius at Bifrons, so called from its two fronts. Sir John Hales shut himself up, like the miser Elwes, on his immense estate, living on a crust, and allowing his only son to die in prison. The bold refractory and clever boy, Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, was leading his schoolmaster, Talbot, a life of torment at the Canterbury Grammar School, and by his temper, and the daring directness of his talents, laying the foundation of his future greatness. From a small house opposite the west door of Canterbury Cathedral had once issued a Countess of Salisbury, and the same humble tenement was destined to be the birthplace of a Chief Justice of England. Dover had supplied a Lord Chancellor who occupied the woolsack for nearly twenty years in the person of Philip Yorke. Mrs. Macaulay, the republican historian, was at Ollantigh, a fine old house that had been erected by Sir Thomas Kemp in the reign of Henry VII., while her brother, John Saw-

bridge, the patriotic alderman and member for the City of London, was dreaming of civic honours and John Wilkes. Old Dr. Nicholas Carter, the father of Elizabeth, was writing theological tracts against his neighbour, the orthodox Randolph, and bandying Latin epigrams with Sir George Oxenden of Deane; and the poetess herself was writing odes to wisdom, corresponding with Archbishop Secker, and translating Epictetus. Near Sandgate there were the Brockmans of Beechborough, whose ancestor, Sir William Brockman, gallantly defended Maidstone in 1648 against the Parliamentary forces under General Fairfax; and Mr. Deedes, of Sandling and Saltwood Castle, which was partially destroyed by the earthquake of 1587. Sir John Shaw had a small marine villa on the beach.

Such was East Kent from about 1720 to 1765. Sir Egerton Bridges regretted that he was only slightly acquainted with Elizabeth Carter, from whom he might have learned much. For a clearer, more extensive, or better regulated mind, he declared, was unrecorded in the annals of genius and learning. He found her manners cold, stiff, and formal, the result of constitutional shyness, of which her intimate

friends, however, had no cause to complain. In Kent she lived principally within the narrow limits of her native town, but, like Sir Egerton, she found it pleasant to escape from provincial surroundings to the world at large.

There might be found at this period Pope, Bolingbroke, Gray, Johnson, Hume, Chesterfield, Robertson, Warburton, Lowth, Burke, Lord Chatham, Fielding, Richardson, the Whartons, Akenside, Young, Lyttelton, Horace Walpole, Pulteney, Colman, Mason, Soame Jenyns and Garrick. With most of these men she was acquainted, and many of them were her intimate friends.

CHAPTER III

MRS. CARTER'S VIEWS ON MARRIAGE

In accordance with the dignified custom of the day, which conceded to ladies the privilege of being the first to acknowledge the flight of time, Elizabeth Carter at a certain age assumed the brevet rank of a matron, for which she had not qualified by matrimony: a fashion which has become obsolete in these latter days, when of course all the world is young.

Matrimony she considered 'a very right scheme for everybody but herself,' and she returned from her brother's marriage exceedingly consoled by the reflection that, 'though she was very much tired of a wedding, it was not her own.' Her gloomy forebodings on her sister-in-law's chances of happiness, founded on an intimate knowledge of her brother's temper and uncomfortable health, were happily not realised; it proved to be a union of uninter-

rupted affection, confidence, and happiness. In spite of her clear sight and common sense she overlooked the fact that in this matter, as in many another hazardous enterprise, fortune often favours the brave.

Her 'square cornered heart' and views on this subject filled her family and friends with dismay. Her father told her that, though it always gave him a 'sharp uneasiness' to differ from her, like every good parent he secretly prayed to see her married to a good man, who could maintain her decently, and whose temper was suitable to her own. No one ought to marry against his or her will, he allowed, but will should be guided by reason. Though she did not value the judgment of the world, it was not to be slighted, and marriage 'procured more consideration than single life, which is often errant, and seldom meets with much respect.' He laid no commands upon her, as he wished neither to part with her nor to keep her against her desire. He did not condemn her, but commended her to the direction of Heaven.

These urgent appeals and warnings were dispatched to 'Dear Bet' at intervals during many years. The respective merits of Mr. B., Mr. D., and Mr. G. were severally set forth,

according to the proposal under immediate discussion. (Even at this distance of time, assuredly Mrs. Carter's sense of honour would have forbidden their real names being given.) At length, weary of platitudes, feigned resignation, and the conventional methods of parental persuasion, the worthy Doctor pours out his whole soul, like a woman, into a postscript, the only place where the feminine mind is said to be clearly set forth.

It contains a terrible threat :

'*P.S.*—I cannot forbear saying that when I die, and you are single, you will certainly find a vast difference with regard to the respect of the world.'

Fortunately, however, his daughter Elizabeth possessed a personality that insured her the respect of all whose opinion she valued, and greater than any that she could have secured by a commonplace and loveless marriage. Elizabeth Carter was nevertheless a woman, though a very extraordinary one. Once, indeed, she hesitated, and came very near to accepting a gentleman 'in every way unexceptionable,' to whom she was very much attached, but he was so ill advised as to publish

at that moment some verses of which she could not approve, and in spite of the regrets and remonstrances of her father and friends 'at her missing so good a prospect,' she remained obdurate. Her Strephon quickly found another Delia, and ever after expressed a strong sense of her obliging and handsome conduct! Her friends were less accommodating, and reminded her that, after all, as 'Strephons were not so plenty,' she need have no fear of their again finding occasion to weary her with their persuasions. Such an irresolute Strephon would have proved a very incapable lord and master, but her good sense would have prevented her ever exhibiting to the world that sorry spectacle, a husband that is not the head of the wife, or even the better man of the two.

That stormy February passed, and only from time to time do we read of fresh breezes arising to ruffle the still waters. Perhaps the ease with which Strephon consoled himself shook her faith in the constancy of mankind, for she wrote to a friend, 'I agree with you on the effect fine scenery might have on such lovers as are really in love, but as this is a circumstance which happens much less frequently than the misses are apt to suppose, a

ball-room does better for small talk than an Arcadian solitude.' After all, one Delia appeared to do practically as well as another, and a poor black man who was an object of charity afforded her a comfortable proof that, however destitute of all other possessions, every mortal man may, at all events (if he desire it), be sure to find a wife. Dr. Johnson wished there might be a special form of service for 'marriages of convenience.'

Dr. Carter, the worthy clergyman at Deal, with two families to provide for, was exasperated by these views, and wrote severely :

'If you intend never to marry, you certainly ought to live retired, and not appear in the world with an expense which is reasonable upon the prospect of getting a husband, but not otherwise.'

Mrs. Carter's family were startled one evening at ten o'clock by a most outrageous ringing at the door, which proved to be a letter containing a proposal from an impetuous young man, whose wig was always in an uproar, and who ran over everybody he met, hanging his clothes upon every lock and bolt in the extreme trepidation of his pace. The servant of the aforesaid Orlando, who was the

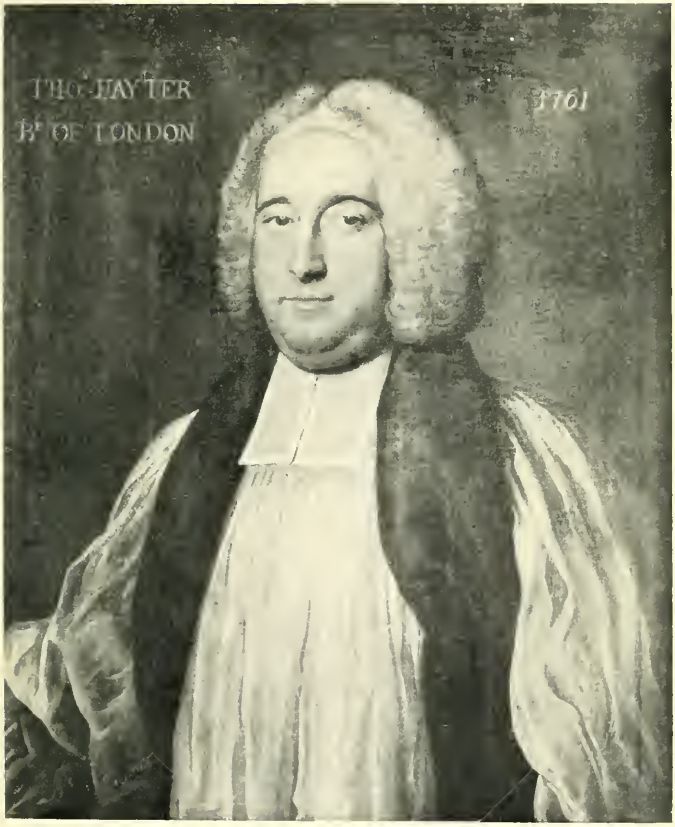
bearer of the letter, demanded an immediate answer, but Mrs. Carter thought it might be as well to read it first; and, though she had an emphatic 'No' extremely at his service, would not detain his emissary. This hasty youth had resolved 'prendre le Roman par la queue, et débuter par le mariage'; but, as he had never signified his intention before, to be sure, the demand was somewhat abrupt and peremptory. The next morning, before any soul was up, the messenger returned, with the same violence of ringing, to carry back her answer to his master, whom she expected any day to come and fly away with her in a chaise and one, unless he should happen to meet with somebody else and be married on the road.

It was alleged that both the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Secker) and the Bishop of London (Dr. Hayter) wanted to marry Mrs. Carter. She always positively denied the rumour about Archbishop Secker, but her contemporaries were not clear that in the case of Bishop Hayter the report was equally unfounded, though she never allowed that it was true. One day in her presence, the Archbishop, feeling his freedom in jeopardy, and losing that presence of mind so essential to

good breeding, exclaimed: 'Brother Hayter, the world says that one of us two is to marry Madam Carter; now I have no such intention, and resign her to you.' Bishop Hayter, however, knew her well, and was assured that whatever might be the views of her family and friends, for her own part she would probably be inwardly murmuring 'God forbid!' in Greek at the idea of either of them, as she had been heard fervently to ejaculate when it was suggested that the learned but uncouth Dr. Burton was very much her admirer. So, with more courage and gallantry, the Bishop bowed to her and replied, 'I will not pay your Grace the same compliment; the world does me great honour by the report.'

Though the Archbishop's manners were not prepossessing, he remained her staunch friend through life. She was frequently his guest at Lambeth, and was indebted to him for his advice in her translation of Epictetus. As the owner of her house at Deal, he proved a most generous landlord, though he indulged, it is true, in a few malicious insinuations when the world said that Madam Carter would marry Lord Bath (Pulteney).

When the Archbishop died she sincerely



THOMAS HAYTER, BISHOP OF LONDON

From a painting in Fulham Palace

mourned the great and good man, with whose friendship she had been honoured for more than twenty years, and to whom she was under such innumerable obligations. He left a sealed packet for her, the contents of which were never known. It was not found amongst her papers, nor was there any memorandum of it.

When Mrs. Carter was upwards of forty years of age, her father received a 'marvellous odd letter' from a Yorkshireman, desiring to be informed with all possible speed whether his daughter had made any resolution against marrying, and if not if she was engaged. But Mrs. Carter said, 'Surely the poor man must have lived in a wood, or he would have known that no one has a right to ask the first question, and could not suppose that the curiosity of a stranger would be gratified as to the last.'

It is hardly necessary to note the fact that no more was heard of the Yorkshireman. If Dr. Carter's answer was half as concise and definite as his daughter's, it would not require the astuteness of a North Countryman to see that nothing farther remained to be said on the subject.

On one occasion, when Mrs. Carter had been much tormented by her kind friends as to

the designs of a man who had absolutely none with regard to her or anyone else, she wrote, 'I am convinced that one is not secure from these malicious insinuations on this side an hundred; having run away from matrimonial schemes as far as dry land goes, my next step must be the sea.' She occasionally retorted by raising the hopes of her tormentors. 'Learn not to be too confident,' she wrote; 'my heart which I thought so secure was yesterday in one half hour entirely given up to a—would you believe it?—to a Dutchman! The reason of my being thus taken by surprise was that I never suspected danger from an amphibious inhabitant of the bogs of Holland. I know I shall find no compassion from you, but it luckily happens I do not want it; for this morning I took a dose of algebra fasting, which has entirely cured me.'

To another friend who had urged her to marry she wrote: 'Bless me, I had almost forgot to let you into a most important secret, that I am grown desperately in love, more in love than anybody, with a most agreeable man, who talks a good deal, laughs a good deal, sings a good deal, and yet I cannot very well define why I so greatly admire him. I believe,

however, the strange enchantment that renders him so universally agreeable must be the most settled look of good-nature and happiness that ever appeared in any human countenance. And now I suppose you begin to be in great pain for my heart, but it is really in no danger, and I can safely answer for its giving me no kind of trouble.'

At last her friends learnt to approach the subject more cautiously, and when one of them wrote of a worthy man that had the highest regard for Mrs. Carter, she hastened to add, 'Do not be frightened, I mean nothing more dangerous than Mr. Richardson' (the novelist). Mrs. Carter replied: 'The paragraph in your letter did really put me in a fright. I had for a moment forgot that some folks are married, that other folks are galloped away, ready to break their necks and look for a wife in some distant country, and that there are no folks in the world that trouble their heads about me. It was not till I saw the quiet, harmless name of Richardson that all these comfortable considerations occurred to my thoughts.'

She was informed that Richardson possessed an 'exceedingly like portrait' of her, drawn by Mrs. Chapone without her knowledge, but that,

as he could not possibly wear it in his snuff-box, she need not be scandalised.

Though Mrs. Carter believed that mankind were upon the whole a much better set of beings than some moralists think proper to represent them, she either failed to find perfection, or, having found it, the fates were adverse.

Before creating the personality of Sir Charles Grandison, Richardson asked Mrs. Carter to define her ideal of the perfect man, uniting the fine gentleman and the Christian, that everyone wanted him to draw. She replied: 'One distinguishing part of his character must be an absolute superiority to false glory and false shame, a steady opposition to the false maxims of the world in essential points, and a perfectly good-natured compliance in trifles.'

Richardson had, Mrs. Carter declared, no doubt a very good hand at painting excellence, but there was a strange awkwardness and extravagance in his vicious characters. To be sure, poor man, he had read in a book, or heard someone say that there was such a thing in the world as wickedness, but being perfectly ignorant in what manner it operates on the human heart, he drew such a monster as probably

SAMUEL RICHARDSON

From a painting by Joseph Highmore in the National Portrait Gallery

never existed in mortal shape. Mrs. Chapone apprehended that his creation of Sir Charles Grandison would occasion the kingdom being overrun with old maids. The difference between this ideal character and the generality of men would be so striking, and would make women so hard to please, the consequence would be single life to ninety-nine out of a hundred.

Fielding, on the contrary, seemed to think no character natural but such as are a disgrace to the human species.

Richard Savage wrote to Elizabeth Carter in 1739:

'Dear Madam,—Be pleased to accept my thanks for your pious intention of making me a saint. I am truly desirous of becoming so, because as saints they say are allowed the happiness of conversing with angels, I may be so blest as to become worthy of the conversation of Miss Carter. . . .

'Your most affectionate and devoted servant,

'R. Savage.'

The following reflections flowed from Mrs. Carter's pen as she was thinking of the

marriage of one of her friends, whose chance of happiness appeared to her problematic :

'After all, excepting the *sine qua non* of a good conscience, and exemption from real calamity, that odd thing which we call happiness entirely depends upon the temper and imagination of every individual ; and as "the heart knows its own bitterness," so "a stranger does not intermeddle with its joys." Upon this principle I comfort myself that the way of life which would harass and perplex my aching head with perpetual agitation and cares, serves only to keep some of my friends in good humour and good spirits.'

A very imprudent match caused Mrs. Carter to be drawn into a sorrowful scrape by expressing her opinions too strongly. 'Bless me,' she exclaimed, 'what business had I to talk about things I know nothing about? As my ill stars would have it, I happened to express great pity for people under these dolorous circumstances. Out of mere indolence I shall give up the point, and leave all lovers to hang or drown themselves as they think fit.'

Assurance of the 'mutual society, help and comfort, both in prosperity and adversity, that the one *ought* to have of the other' carried

little conviction to Mrs. Carter's mind, for when harassed almost to death with various disputes and turmoils, she wrote, 'Although I know you will be angry, I cannot for my life help telling you, that ever since I was made unhappy by these commotions, it has been a great consolation to me that I never was tempted by any voluntary connection to engage myself in the tumults of the world. If I have suffered from the troubles of others, what might I not have suffered from a husband?' Socrates, by taking to wife the most impossible person of his acquaintance, sought to show the world that there was no one with whom he could not live peaceably. He desired to have under his roof one who would hourly exercise his powers of endurance. When the ill-tempered Xanthippe trampled on his cake, poured water on his head, and transmitted her failings to a very foolish son, he found the taming of the shrew a more impossible task than Shakespeare has since represented it to be. He was, after all, outdone in patience by the philosophic navvy who, when his wife beat him, said, 'It don't hurt me, and it do her a deal o' good.' The navvy kept silence, whereas the unhappy married life of Socrates was prover-

bial amongst the ancients. It is, therefore, not surprising that Epictetus did not consider 'the affair of marriage in this state of the world a thing which is especially suited to the cynic.' When one of his hearers ventured to remind him of the beautiful Hipparchia who adopted the views and the austere life of her husband Crates, and gave them as conspicuous an example of what a good wife may be as Xanthippe did the reverse, Epictetus sternly rebuked him for quoting such an exceptional case. 'You are speaking of a circumstance which arose from love,' he said, 'and of a woman who was another Crates, but we are inquiring about ordinary marriages.' Crates placed his wife's fortune in the hands of the bankers, with directions that it should be given to his sons if they should prove fools, and to the poor if they proved philosophers.

After all, neither Epictetus nor his translator had any practical experience in the matter, and circumstances are but externals; the immovable self should be the same in all. Therefore, argued a friend, 'Miss Carter at Paris, Miss Carter with a ducal coronet on her coach, would be the same domestic, affectionate, dutiful creature, as Miss Carter at Deal in her

peaceful retirement. She would, like a reasonable woman, secure to herself every day some hours for recollection and improvement, and would as highly enjoy every moment of leisure as she does now. And Miss Carter in a family of her own, ordering her family affairs, surrounded by sons and daughters, dressed in her plain work, fed with her own plum-puddings, taught by her own care, would be still as happy and as valuable a person as either.'

However much gratified Elizabeth Carter may have felt by her friend's opinion of her individuality that surroundings could not affect, she rather resented the allusion to the possible family that under other circumstances she would have so ably clothed, fed and educated, and answered with some asperity:

'One would think by the comfortable domestic scenes into which you introduce me, that you had Lovelace's tombstone in your eye. One part of your description I can answer, for children I have, and though I say it who should not say it, four as fine children as need be desired [her half-brother and sisters]. They are not, indeed, fed with my own plum-pudding, because I have not any to give them, but as far as they have any appetite for the

slender diet of learning, all I have in the world is much at their service.'

'Whate'er we think on't, Fortune's but a toy,
Which cheats the soul with empty shows of joy;
A mere ideal creature of the brain,
That reigns the idol of the mad and vain;
Deludes their senses with a fair disguise,
And sets an airy bliss before their eyes.
But when they hope to grasp the glitt'ring prey,
Th' unstable fantom vanishes away.

. . . . . .

Could mortals learn to limit their desires,
Little supplies what Nature's want requires,
Content affords an inexhausted store,
And void of that a Monarch's wealth is poor.
Grant but ten thousand pounds, Philaurus cries,
That happy sum would all my wants suffice.
Assenting powers the golden blessing grant,
But with his wealth, his wishes too augment.
With anxious care he pines amidst his store,
And starves himself to get ten thousand more.
Ambition's charms Philotimus inspire,
A treas'rer's staff the pitch of his desire:
The staff he gains, yet murmurs at his fate,
And longs to shine first Minister of State.
A coach and four employ'd Cosmelia's cares,
For this she hourly worried Heav'n with pray'rs.
Did this when gained her restless temper fix?
No, she still prays—for what?—a coach and six.

. . . . . .

A soul which uncorrupted Reason sways
With calm indiff'rence Fortune's gifts surveys;
If Providence an affluent store denies,
Its own intrinsic worth that want supplies;

Disdains by vicious actions to acquire
That glitt'ring trifle vulgar minds admire;
With ease to Heaven's superior will resigns,
Nor meanly at another's wealth repines;
Firmly adheres to Virtue's steady rules,
And scorns the fickle deity of fools.'

When Mrs. Thrale had given great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and triumph over the 'Bas Bleu' ladies by her marriage with Piozzi, her daughter's singing master, and Mrs. Macaulay, the republican historian, had captivated a youth, twenty-six years her junior—a marriage which might have been pardonable, Mrs. Montagu sarcastically said, if he had been great-great-grandson to one of the regicides—Mrs. Carter, aged sixty-five, wrote to Mrs. Montagu:

'Marriage seems to be as general this year as influenza. I hope, as you and I have escaped the one, we shall not be carried off by the other. Good lack a day! What a *tapage* such an event would make in the world!'

Up to the time of her death, in her eighty-ninth year, Mrs. Carter would say, 'Nobody knows what *may* happen; I never said I would not marry.'

CHAPTER IV

ARCHBISHOP SECKER AND CATHARINE TALBOT

Elizabeth Carter's knowledge of the world was considerably extended during her earlier years by her friendship with Catharine Talbot, the adopted daughter of Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury. Mrs. Carter was frequently the guest of Dr. Secker, when, as Bishop of Oxford, he resided at Cuddesdon, and also at St. Paul's, when preferment to that deanery provided the Bishop with a house in London.

Later on, when Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Secker, with Mrs. and Miss Talbot, was always ready to bid her welcome to Lambeth, where they did not insist on her company all day long, but left her free to sit as unmolested by her own fireside as in her own home. In summer she might watch from the windows the 'family syllabub' and dance under the trees in the garden.

CATHARINE TALBOT

From the frontispiece to 'The Works of the late Miss Catharine Talbot,' (1812)

As a guest of Archbishop Secker, Mrs. Carter was lodged in one of the towers, and was the only occupant of that side of the palace which is separated from the rest of the house by the chapel. Through this and other venerable buildings she used to pass every night, under Gothic arches dimly lighted by pale lamps, with all the winds of heaven whistling round her, followed by the echo of her own steps, and the deep hollow sound of the closing doors. In this situation she felt with great force the grandeur of a storm. The prospect from one of her windows was a long green court, terminated by the gateway which forms a 'fine perplexity of arches' in all directions. The other side of the tower was shaded by tall trees, and through their branches there was a view of the Thames, which washed their roots. She delighted in rambling through the long, narrow Gothic passages which led she knew not whither. From a little window in one of them she could look down into the chapel, which she often viewed by moonlight.

The more frequented parts of the house were so modernised as to have lost all their ancient style, and what in its original state would have appeared solemn and venerable

became merely dull, the only point ever gained by modernising Gothic buildings. She always 'honoured Lord and Lady Northumberland for preserving the Gothic grandeur of Alnwick Castle, undiminished by the fopperies of modern prettiness.'

During her visits to Lambeth Elizabeth Carter joined the daily family readings of English authors, conducted in an orderly and sociable way, after breakfast and supper. Ten o'clock was the closing hour both morning and evening. After chapel they all retired to their apartments, unless sunshine tempted them abroad, and Lady Mary Grey, who was a principal figure in their little domestic history, read Tully's 'Offices' or Molière to Miss Talbot, while she embroidered or painted. When daylight failed, the ladies exercised themselves by walking in a large unfurnished room, sometimes by moonlight, conversing in a manner that made that hour the most agreeable of the four-and-twenty. After seven, quadrille was called in, to vary the object of their attention from history and spinning wheels to aces black and red.

Thomas Secker, who was born in 1693, was the son of a Dissenter, and whilst studying

divinity with a view to the ministry, finding himself unable to determine with which sect he wished to identify himself, he resolved to study physic until his opinions were more thoroughly settled. He took his degree of M.D. at Leyden in 1721, and whilst studying anatomy in Paris formed a life-long friendship with Martyn Benson, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, of whom Pope wrote :

'Manners with candour is to Benson giv'n.'

Through the persuasion of his school-fellow, Joseph Butler, author of the 'Analogy' and afterwards Bishop of Durham, who had also been educated for the Dissenting ministry, Secker returned to England and followed his example of taking orders in the Established Church.

The advancement of these three young men, Secker, Butler, and Benson, was entirely due to their friend Edward Talbot, who on his death-bed recommended them to the notice of his father, the Bishop of Durham, and was thus the means of providing the Church with three distinguished prelates.

Edward Talbot died of small-pox a few months after his marriage, and his daughter, Catharine Talbot, was born in 1720, five months

after her father's death. The family is now represented in the peerage by Lord Dynevor, who is descended through the female line from Edward Talbot's elder brother, the Lord Chancellor.

Thomas Secker married, in 1725, Catherine Benson, sister of the Bishop of Gloucester. She lived with the widow of his friend, Edward Talbot, and after their marriage the Seckers persuaded Mrs. Talbot to make her home with them. They had no family, and her infant daughter, Catharine, was brought up as their own child.

After twenty years of married life Mrs. Secker died, and Mrs. and Miss Talbot continued to live with Archbishop Secker till his death in 1768. Catharine Talbot only survived him for a short time, and died unmarried in 1770, in her forty-ninth year.

Dr. Secker was successively Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, Bishop of Bristol (1734), Bishop of Oxford (1737), Dean of St. Paul's (1750), and in 1758 he was raised to the Archiepiscopal See of Canterbury. As Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, Dr. Secker had much trouble in steering a clear course amidst the difficulties occasioned by the unfortunate differences between King George II. and

his eldest son, the Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness having removed to Norfolk House, which is in the parish of St. James's, constantly attended Divine service at that church. The first time he came the curate inadvertently began prayers with the usual sentence, 'I will arise and go to my Father,' and it was asserted that the Rector preached on the Fifth Commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.'

Bishop Sherlock could only defend Secker by saying that he must certainly have been in a course of sermons on the Commandments, and was, unfortunately, obliged to preach on this particular one in its turn. Secker himself declared that his whole discourse had been on the subject of 'The Lord is good to all.'

In any case his Royal Highness forgave him, and he baptized most of the Royal children, including the future King George III. He could not, however, attend the Prince's Court, which was forbidden to all those who went to the King's. Dr. Secker had also the misfortune to incur his Majesty's displeasure, who supposed his influence much greater with the Prince than it really was, and thought he might have used it to more purpose. For this

reason the King did not speak to him for a great number of years.

Through life Secker, Butler, and Benson lost no opportunity of advancing each other's interests. Secker mentioned Butler to the Queen (Caroline the illustrious), who thought he had been dead. On making further inquiries she was assured he was not 'dead, but buried.' The kind-hearted Queen, acting on this suggestion, soon after appointed him her Clerk of the Closet.

Archbishop Secker made a proposal for appointing bishops in some of the American colonies to save the loss and hazard incurred by candidates for ordination, who were obliged to cross the Atlantic at the cost of 100*l.*; of those who undertook that voyage nearly a fifth part actually lost their lives. He contended that the members of the English Church in America did not enjoy its benefits, having no Protestant bishop within 3,000 miles of them, a case which never had its parallel before in the Christian world. His Grace further declared it never had been intended to appoint a bishop in New England, but that episcopal colonies had always been proposed. He bequeathed 1,000*l.* to this scheme.

A volume of Catharine Talbot's essays, reflections, and poems was published after her death by Elizabeth Carter; her writings show her to have been a woman of culture and common sense, and, as in the every-day conduct of life sense is none too common, her reflections and maxims bear reiteration. The following is a specimen:

'On the employment of wealth,' she writes, describing people who, by squandering their fortunes, reduce themselves to all the shifts and pinches that often make them rapacious and dishonest. 'By lavishing their money on a hundred poor devils who have run themselves into misery from mere worthlessness their fortune has become a prey to the good-for-nothing, and is like a quantity of gold dust dispersed uselessly in the air, that might have been melted down and formed into regal crowns and monuments of glory. Thus the man of quality is reduced to all the meannesses imaginable, and has the humbled air of inferiority when he meets the eye of his unpaid tradesman.'

Elizabeth Carter corresponded regularly with Catharine Talbot, who could not for the life of her write short letters. One of her

immoderately long epistles to a friend who was travelling in the East saved him the loss of a valuable ring that had been given to him by Lord Northumberland. He was attacked by robbers, who examined his papers, but the sight of so much writing discouraged them, and they returned all the packets, including one containing the ring.

As a specimen of laconic letters, Miss Talbot quoted that of Quin the actor, whose tongue, his monument in Bath Abbey tells us,

'Kept all the table on a roar.'

'MR. RICH,—I have received yours, and am at Bath. QUIN.'

'MR. QUIN,—I have received yours, and you may stay at Bath and be hanged. RICH.'

Miss Talbot was afraid, however, that *hanged* was not the original word.

When residing at St. Paul's Deanery, Sunday was the evening allotted for Mrs. and Miss Talbot to be at home, in order that fine ladies might not be interrupted by drays and waggons, or hindered from going to drums and plays.

In this way the Talbots saw many more

friends than they did when living in Piccadilly during Dr. Secker's incumbency at St. James's, for, owing to the distance, fixed days and appointed times were necessary. When the fine folk set about going to St. Paul's in an afternoon, they so much over-reckoned the distance, that by means of dining by sunrise they arrived an hour earlier than they would have thought it possible at St. James's to ring for tea. Everyone was so glad and so obliged by these laborious visits, and innumerable court'sies were made to a neighbour at St. James's that in other days the Talbots would have put themselves in no hurry to visit.

The Spring Miss Talbot sometimes passed in the beautiful, well-cultivated country at Brompton, which was all laid out in gardens, where she enjoyed the cuckoo and thrush, and sometimes the nightingale. There was something so charmingly alive in the environs of London, where the joy of town and country was united, and it was possible to sit on a shady seat in pure air and sunshine, surrounded by roses and carnations, and to hear the guns from the Park and Tower. She also delighted in a sweet village called Kilburn, where the air and grass were as fresh as a thousand miles from

London. Mrs. Carter declared that the vale of Tempe that ancient poets extol could not have exceeded in beauty those delightful meadows that form the banks of the Thames. She visited Richmond in 1738 with a company large enough to form an Eastern monarch's travelling camp, and though she was so 'rattled about in the coach' that she was fit for nothing but to lie down and sleep on her arrival, she walked from thence to Twickenham and enjoyed the charming landscapes. By the interest of one of their company with 'Mr. Pope's celebrated man John,' they got a sight of the gardens that adorned the poet's villa at Twickenham. From them all the tedious regularity that he thus describes was banished :

> 'No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene,
> Grove nods to grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other.'

As Mr. Pope was so sensible of the false taste of this dull, unnatural uniformity, he took care to avoid it in his own garden, which, if not so unbounded as his genius, had as much variety in it. This charming spot resembled, more closely than anything Mrs. Carter had previously seen, those beautiful descriptions

that till then she had feared existed only in the imagination of poets. The shrubs were scattered about with the most agreeable wildness. The trees were grown with as much freedom as in a forest, and not distorted into the unnatural shapes of triumphal arches or elbow-chairs. In one part of the garden was a winding ascent, leading to the top of a mount, that was surrounded by a hedge of yew and covered with trees. Through their branches was discovered a vista of the Thames. The whole place appeared to be the sequestered habitation of a society of wood-nymphs, and formed a retreat for the Muses equal to their own Parnassus, so 'twas no wonder they took so long a journey to pay such frequent visits to Mr. Pope.'

Miss Talbot was thoroughly versed in the theory of cheerfulness, and had no notion that anybody could be seriously in the spleen, though almost everybody is subject to waking dreams of misery. But a little serious reflection sets life in a very different light from that in which fancy places it upon every little vexation. She had a great notion that half one's business in this world is to make the best of everything, as common good-breeding teaches us to do at the most ordinary entertainment that is made for us.

She had no notion of the fine-lady airs of hating her neighbours, and when she resided at Cuddesdon during the years Dr. Secker was Bishop of Oxford, she visited eighteen families at distances varying from three to fourteen miles, and twenty neighbours in Oxford. 'As for seeing people one likes,' she declared, 'one must learn to like people one sees. 'Tis a note to this body, a message to that; an errand to one end of the house, and a whim to send one to another; a robin to be fed at this window, and a tom-tit to be attended to at another; cats or chickens, spinsters or ague patients. Methusalem was a happy man, if he had any genius for filling up his time. When anybody has read or writ a folio they have somewhat to show; but bills of fare, messages, letters of business, are Sibyl's leaves dispersed by the breeze.'

Miss Talbot had but three creatures in the world over whom she had any right to exercise control—a foolish dog, a restive horse, and a perverse gardener. She did not wish to be one of those reformers who desire to mend everybody around them, while poor self, the only person they could really influence, is forgot. She rather agreed with the well-bred

Pericles, who denied that either prudence, justice, or fortitude can belong to women, and therefore gave them a polite admonition to keep quiet, and make themselves as little talked of as possible.

CHAPTER V

MRS. CARTER'S LITERARY WORKS AND PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

In 1738, at the age of twenty-one, Elizabeth Carter published a small collection of poems, printed by Cave, the original and enthusiastic editor of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' who, as Johnson declared, scarcely ever looked out of the window but with a view to its improvement. In this periodical some of her poems had previously appeared with the signature of 'Eliza.'

A cut of St. John's Gate figures on the title-page. This edition is very scarce, and only two of the poems contained in it were included in the edition generally called the first, which was not published till 1762, when she was forty-five years of age.

In the year 1739 she translated from the French of M. Crousaz a critique of Pope's

'Essay on Man.' There is no preface; no translator's name is mentioned; the notes are few and not of any great importance.

Crousaz, a Swiss professor, and zealous promoter of pure religion, believed Pope's 'Essay on Man,' notwithstanding Warburton's elaborate explanation, to be hostile to revealed religion, and written under the influence of Bolingbroke. Mrs. Carter's notes tended to moderate the severity of Crousaz's criticism. She always defended Pope against accusations of ill-nature, and declared that he had been stung by provocation and ill-treatment.

Warburton, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, had joined in a cabal against Pope. He accused Milton of borrowing from pride and affectation, Dryden from want of leisure and indolence, Addison from modesty, and Pope of necessity, from want of genius. Though he helped Theobald in the edition of Shakespeare published in opposition to that of Pope, he afterwards transferred his allegiance, and became as ardent in his defence of Pope as he had been zealous for the triumph of his opponent. He 'undertook to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz.' Pope thus expressed his gratitude:

'You have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. . . . I know I meant just what you have explained; but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself, but you express me better than I could express myself.'

Pope thus clearly shows that he did not intentionally attack religion. If Bolingbroke made him unwittingly the means of disseminating his views, he was, as Dr. Johnson triumphantly declares, 'now engaged with his eyes open on the side of truth.' Bolingbroke always disguised his real opinions from his pupil, and hated Warburton for having revealed them to him. Pope repaid his services by introducing him to Mr. Allen, 'who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishopric.' Warburton admitted that some of his own writings were thought vain, insolent, and ill-natured, and many of his bold and original criticisms and conjectures in his edition of Shakespeare have been exposed by Dr. Johnson.

The concluding sentence of a sermon Warburton preached before the House of Lords in 1760, on the anniversary of King Charles's

martyrdom, sums up that ill-fated monarch's character in a manner that displays the preacher's ingenuity in not sacrificing truth even in the panegyric of princes:

'In a word, his princely qualities were neither great enough nor bad enough to succeed in that most difficult of all attempts, the enslaving of a free and jealous people.'

Elizabeth Carter translated in the same year (1739), from the Italian, Algarotti's 'Newtonianismo per le Dame,' Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy explained for the use of the ladies, in six dialogues on light and colour. Dr. Birch wrote of her: 'This lady is a very extraordinary phenomenon in the republic of letters, for her knowledge of the ancient and modern languages; an equal skill in any one of them would be a distinction to a person of the other sex.' Mrs. Carter never spoke willingly of either of these translations—they were unworthy of her powers.

With these exceptions, it does not appear that she wrote anything for the press till her celebrated translation of Epictetus, which she began in 1749, though it was not published till 1758. From this hard work she declared her head received no kind of injury. She would

hardly ever read or work for more than half an hour at a time, and then visit for a few minutes any relations in the house, or go into her garden.

After the success of this great work, which not only brought her in 1,000*l.*, but made her acquainted with all the literary people of the day, she wrote to one who feared her head might be turned: 'I have no painful excellence, alas! to give you any particular apprehension about me; I wear my hat in the same way as I used to wear it, I dress just as awkwardly, and look just as silly as ever.' Some years earlier she had written to a friend whose exaggerated admiration of her talents prevented an easy intercourse, and whose obsequious letters annoyed her:

'It is with the utmost diffidence that I venture to do myself the high honour of writing to you, when I consider my own nothingness and utter incapacity of doing any one thing upon earth. Unless I had as many tongues in my head as there are grains of dust between this and Canterbury, it is impossible for me to express the millionth part of the obligations I have to you, therefore I must content myself with assuring you

that I am, with the sublimest veneration and most profound humility,

'Your most devoted, obsequious, respectful, obedient, obliged, and dutiful humble servant,

'E. CARTER.

'I shall die with envy if you outdo this.'

The extraordinary circumstance of a translation from the Greek of so difficult an author by a woman made a great noise all over Europe. In her own country, however, some persons chose to assert that her father wrote it, and others said it was Archbishop Secker. George, first Lord Lyttelton, said that he admired Mrs. Carter's preface more and more, and was much struck by the poem prefixed to it by Mrs. Chapone. 'The English ladies,' he wrote, 'will appear as much superior to the French in wit and learning as the men in arms.'

The quarto volume, published by subscription, consisted of all Epictetus's discourses preserved by Arrian in four books, fragments ranslated from the original Greek, and the 'Enchiridion,' which is the only part that had been previously translated into any modern language, except French. In 1710, when

scarcely twenty years old, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had translated the 'Enchiridion' of Epictetus, but only from the Latin version. Her great-grandson Lord Wharncliffe, in his edition of her works, published in 1837, draws attention to it as a great literary curiosity. He adds that, when she presented it to Dr. Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, for his emendations, she wrote, 'Here is the work of one week of my solitude.' Mr. Harris, the author of 'Hermes,' and father of the first Earl of Malmesbury, lent Mrs. Carter a copy of the French translation, which was extremely scarce, and had been published 150 years earlier. He was a deep scholar, a philosopher and philologist, and his critical knowledge of the Greek language induced her to consult him on all obscure passages.

This work was undertaken at the request of Miss Talbot, who spent the hours before breakfast reading Epictetus, and was provoked that there was no translation of his precepts preserved by Arrian, a work which she was 'vastly curious' to see. She lamented that she was confined to dull, imperfect translations of the noblest authors. The family readings of Livy showed the greatest sentiments clothed

in the meanest words, provoking the most absurd mixture of admiration and ridicule. In defence of their faith and homes, the Samnites were described as fighting 'for church and chimney,' and the style very much resembled that of a celebrated orator in the county of Kent, who in the petition for the King before the sermon prayed for 'George and family.'

Though Mrs. Carter's first translation appeared to her neither sense nor language, she preferred to write obscure bad English rather than disoblige her friend, and claimed to be, perhaps, the first translator who was animated by a spirit of enthusiasm. Dr. Secker considered it very good, and only objected to its being 'writ too smooth,' and in too ornamented a style. Epictetus was a plain man, and spoke plainly, to express which fact the translation should preserve the spirit of the original, and unless she could prove that Epictetus wore a laced coat, the Archbishop would not allow her to dress him in one.

Mrs. Carter acknowledged that the 'Enchiridion' was merely plain common sense; but maintained that Arrian's commentary was much less simple, and in some places abrupt and unconnected, and if the sense was preserved,

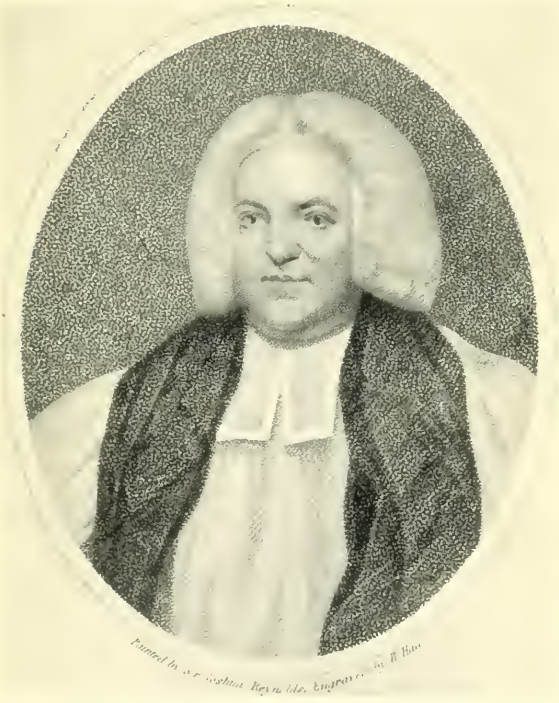
it was lawful to make him speak a language that is easy and natural, rather than retain any peculiar modes of his own country, which may appear uncouth and awkward. Arrian, the Archbishop argued, was not a commentator on Epictetus as Simplicius was, but professed to exhibit his very conversations and discourses, as Xenophon did those of Socrates, and a translator should preserve his genuine air and character, as far as is consistent with making him rightly understood.

The following extract from a letter shows the extent to which her old friend the Archbishop, assisted her with his advice:

Letter from Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury (then Bishop of Oxford)

Cuddesdon: *Sept.* 13, 1749.

'Good Miss Carter,—. . . Every ancient writer should be laid before the modern reader such as he is. Epictetus will make a better figure in his homely garb than in any other. Abruptness often adds much force and persuasion to what is said. It shows the speaker to be in earnest, which hath the greatest weight of anything; and the same sentiments



THOMAS SECKER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

From an engraving after a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

delivered in a smooth and polite professional style are no longer the same. These last were the methods in vogue when Epictetus lived, and they had brought philosophy into disregard and disgrace. He saw it with grief; and reproved Messieurs les Philosophes with an honest zeal. . . . I confess myself to have bent the stick as strongly as I could the opposite way to yours, yet I think a rough and almost literal translation, if it doth but relish strongly of that warm and practical spirit which to me is the characteristic of this book, infinitely preferable to the most elegant paraphrase, that lets it evaporate and leaves the reader unmoved.'

After this Dr. Secker, who had shut himself up with Epictetus for near a month, never leaving his study but for a morning ride or walk, refused to give her any more assistance, and wrote in his usual blunt manner: 'Are you not ashamed to persecute a poor English Archbishop with heathen Greeks, which it may be hoped he hath the grace to forget entirely? But you cannot be quiet in your bed, you say, without doing it. Very probable truly; for I read of some persons, "They sleep not

except they cause some to fall." Mrs. Carter answered:

'Tis not to be told how miserably I looked upon Epictetus, and how miserably Epictetus looked upon me at the news that my Lord had so inhumanly given us up to our own devices; however, in consequence of our philosophy, we are determined to go peaceably blundering on; he in being translated till I cannot understand him, and I in translating till nobody can understand me.'

Mrs. Carter was very careless in revising her proof sheets, and the Archbishop wrote to her:

'Do, dear Madam Carter, get yourself whipt, *get yourself whipt.* Indeed, it is quite necessary. I know you mean to be careful, but you cannot without this help. Everything else has been tried, and proves ineffectual. The first thing I have cast my eyes on is Epictetus for Epicurus; one need go no further to see what prescription your case indicates.'

In her preface Mrs. Carter mentions the fact that the Stoic sect was founded by Zeno about three hundred years before Christ, and fell with the Roman Empire.

All philosophers held that the end of man

is to live conformably to nature, though their methods of attaining to this end varied. Some of the Epicureans by means of pleasure debased man into a mere animal, while to others pleasure meant only freedom from uneasiness, for even Epicurus recognised the universal obligation of a virtuous life, and his adversaries admitted that his own was simple, pure, and manly.

The Stoics, on the contrary, aimed at an absolute perfection of the soul, but their noble efforts resulted in the idolatry of human nature, and a proud self-sufficiency that insulted it, by enjoining a perfection of which this life is incapable. Neither sect understood man in his mixed capacity; both considered him as independent and self-reliant; thus self-satisfaction checked progress and improvement.

Between these two doctrines Horace wavered; at one time he aspired to become an active man and plunged into public life; at another he glided back insensibly into the precepts of Aristippus and the pleasure-seekers, and strove to make circumstances subservient to himself, instead of adapting himself to circumstances.

Modern heathens are apt to be Epicureans

in practice and Stoics in theory, and when both fail have recourse to the pistol, that open gate of which Epictetus probably spoke ironically, as it was contrary to his principles and to the practice of the best of his sect: 'Go hang yourself, like a grumbling, mean-spirited wretch as you are; God has no need of such querulous, discontented people as you.'

Unacquainted with the doctrine of a future state, the Stoic saw no other means of vindicating the justice and goodness of God, and reconciling it with the unequal distributions of things, than by renouncing the feelings of the human heart and denying pain to be an evil.

The preparation of the mind by the anticipation of calamities was a favourite Stoic doctrine, but misfortunes are not better supported by being considered beforehand.

By the regulation of his desires the Stoic endeavoured to escape disappointment, to annihilate feelings of aversion, and to regard all external objects with absolute indifference. Good and evil meant virtue and vice, and excluded life, health, ease, friends, reputation, which were mere appearances, from any share in human happiness. A universal apathy followed.

Active exertion or restraint of the inclinations insured a proper observance of all social relations, and comprehended the whole system of moral duties. A Stoic never formed any opinion, so could not be misled even during sleep, intoxication, or delirium, though some authors were so very reasonable as to admit the possibility of his being mistaken in his judgment after he had lost his senses. The judgments of the mind the Stoics termed principles, and determined the faculty of willing on the actions or course of life. The preconceptions were innate notions, the adaptation of which is the office of reason, and is insisted upon by Epictetus as a point of the highest importance. By prosperity the Stoics understood the actual state of mind, when the affections and active powers are so regulated that all events appear happy, and nothing can fall out contrary to its wishes. Stoical insensibility fell far short of Christian fortitude, for to walk in the narrow way and do our best, humbly acknowledging our failure, rejoicing in hope, and aiming at perfection, appeared to the Greeks, including Epictetus, foolishness.

Though the Stoics carried their logic to such a degree of subtlety as rendered their

reasoning incoherent and perplexed, they held that there is one God, incorruptible, unoriginated, immortal, rational, perfect in intelligence and happiness, unsusceptible of all evil, governing the world and everything in it, the Creator of the universe and Father of all, though not of human form; and those authors who represent them as little better than atheists do them great injustice. They believed in the eternity of matter, but that it was reduced into form by God; and that the world was made, and is continually governed, by Him. They were the most zealous defenders of the doctrine of a particular Providence, and utterly rejected the notion of chance. By Fate they understood the events appointed by the immutable counsels of God. Cicero allows that Chrysippus, whose eloquence, it was said, the speech of the gods must resemble, endeavoured to reconcile Fate with Free Will. God's own eternal Will is His Law; that He cannot change, because He always ordains what is best. As Fate is no more than a connected series of causes, God is the first Original Cause, on which all the rest depend. On the subject of the immortality of the soul the Stoics were confused and uncertain. Plato held that it is as a

punishment that the soul is united to the body, and buried in it as in a tomb. After its liberation it takes its essence in the ether, and becomes immortal and Divine.

That a good man stretched on a rack or reposing on a bed of roses should enjoy himself equally, was a doctrine that gained few proselytes, and drove many disciples from the thorny asperities of the painted Portico, where Zeno opened his school, to the flowery gardens of Epicurus.

Few could attain to the spirit of the epitaph of the emancipated slave:

> 'I, Epictetus, was a slave, and ailing in body,
> But poor as I was, yet dear to the Immortals.'

The doctrine of virtue being its own reward could not safeguard them from sufferings entailed by the follies and wrong-doings of others.

Though Mrs. Carter had learnt from Epictetus to talk of the headache as if it were no evil, her friend Mrs. Chapone would have felt greater respect for that philosopher if she could furnish a receipt to prevent one suffering any pain from the faults and follies of those with whom we are connected. Failing this, she held Mrs. Carter's stoical airs and all such stuff

in mortal contempt, and was not at all comforted by her jargon.

It is remarkable that in no sect of philosophers was suicide so frequently committed as among the Stoics; whereby they contradicted their noble precepts of submission to the Divine Will. Zeno hanged himself when his finger ached.

They allowed the duty of praise and thanksgiving for Divine assistance in moral improvements, but they knew no repentance of their failings.

Socrates, who had of all mankind the fairest claim to be an instructor and reformer of the world, confessed that he knew nothing, and acknowledged the want, of a superior Guide. There is a remarkable passage in Epictetus in which he represents it as the office of God, or of one deputed by Him, to appear among mankind as a Teacher and Example.

Mrs. Carter thought Epictetus inferior to Socrates, but saw no reason to reduce him to the level of modern heathen like Lord Bolingbroke, who treated Plato and St. Paul with equal virulence, being opposed to all that was good in either Christians or heathen.

She had more pleasure in reading Plato,

and other philosophers who wrote before our Saviour, than Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and those that lived after; the remarkable difference in the clearness of whose notions show that they must have borrowed their best lights from the Christian religion.

Like her friend, Miss Talbot, with whom she often corresponded on this subject, she was more willing to believe that Epictetus had never read the New Testament, than that, having read it, he should have remained unconverted. Had he not been dazzled with the little light he had, and too well satisfied that he himself was a luminous body from whence it proceeded, he would have sought for the true sunshine, and seeking would have found it.

Mrs. Carter was very partial to Plato, and thought he wanted nothing but the help of Divine Revelation, which he longed for, and knew was to come. He foretold, as Grotius expresses it, that in order that a truly righteous man should be manifested, it was necessary that his virtue should be despoiled of all its ornaments, so that he should be considered by others as a malefactor ('numbered amongst the transgressors'), be derided, and at last be

hanged (*suspendatur*, Grot. 'De Verit.' lib. iv.). So likewise he says that Socrates told Alcibiades that, in proper time, a Divine person would come into the world, who out of his care and tender regard to mankind, would remove all doubts, disperse all darkness, and fully instruct them how to present their prayers, praises, and religious offerings to the Supreme Being in a pure and acceptable manner. ('Alcibiad II,' as cited by Blackwall, 'Sacred Classics,' vol. ii. p. 111.)

The cruelty of the Athenians proved that something more than the illumination of speculation, reason, and the fine arts is necessary to dispel the darkness of disordered principles and tame the savage outbreak of passions.

The whole heathen system of augury, divination, oracles, &c., arose from the universal want felt for some Divine assistance, and the insufficiency of the soul to its own virtue and happiness. How unlike the *soi-disant* philosophers of Edinburgh and Paris was that distinguished ornament of polished Greece, Xenophon, one of the greatest generals and most illustrious philosophers in all heathen antiquity. He carefully sought his way through clouds and darkness; they, on the contrary,

shut their eyes against the Divine illumination which brightened all around them.

The most hopeless people to convince of the truth of Christianity Mrs. Carter found to be amongst those of vacant life, reasoning—not reasonable—heads, and regular conduct; too highly conceited of human understanding to think it needs any assistance, and too well satisfied with human virtue to think it wants any forgiveness. 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.'

She thought there was something so grovelling and base, so unworthy of an intelligent being, in the endeavour of levelling itself to the condition of a mere clod. David Hume wrote in favour of suicide, unmoved with horror at the mischief produced by such a doctrine. The distraction of those unhappy families in which such a dreadful accident has ever happened might have checked the pen of a demon; and Voltaire's verses attempted to destroy the only hope which makes life supportable, for nothing can give real delight unless connected with immortal ideas. To those who complained to Epictetus that they could no longer endure being bound to the body, and cried, 'Did we

not come from God? Allow us to depart to the place from which we came,' he would answer, 'Friends, wait for God: when He shall give the signal to release you from His service, then go to Him; but for the present dwell in the place where He has put you. Short indeed is the time of your dwelling here.'

Miss Talbot thought many people would study Mrs. Carter's translation who would scorn to look into a Bible; fine gentlemen would read it because it was new; fine ladies because it was Mrs. Carter's; critics because it was a translation out of the Greek; and Shaftesburian heathen because Epictetus was an honour to heathenism and an idolater of the beauty of virtue.

The work sold so well, and the price kept up so remarkably that, some years after, Archbishop Secker brought her a booksellers' catalogue, saying, 'Here, Madam Carter, see how ill I am used by the world; here are my sermons selling at half-price, while your Epictetus truly is not to be had under eighteen shillings; three shillings less than the original subscription.'

After the publication of her 'Epictetus' Mrs. Carter became wholly independent of her father, and she was enabled to spend several

months every winter in London. No. 20 Clarges Street, where she had rooms for many years on the first floor, was next door to the house, No. 21, where she eventually died. Clarges Street had been built in 1717, the year of Mrs. Carter's birth, on the site of Clarges House, a property owned by the family of Anne Clarges, wife of General Monk, Duke of Albemarle. Mrs. Carter had as neighbours the distinguished Admiral, Lord St. Vincent, and Charles James Fox, and at No. 11, Emma, Lady Hamilton, is believed to have resided. Later on Edmund Kean occupied No. 12. A turnpike that stood at the corner of Piccadilly was abolished in 1761. Boswell entertained Dr. Johnson hard by, in Half Moon Street.

In 1762 Mrs. Carter's establishment at Deal was also put on a different footing. Her brothers and sister were all married, and her stepmother was dead. She therefore bought a house for herself at the southern extremity of the town, commanding a view both of the country and the sea, where her father lived with her. Her friends lamented that her talents should be wasted on the daily round of domestic economy, but she said with her usual

good sense that, though she must be more confined at home and less at the disposal of her friends than when her sister, Mrs. Douglas, supplied her place, she had no idea of its hurting the dignity of her head, for the true post of honour consists in the discharge of those duties which arise from that situation in which Providence has fixed us.

She presided over the cookery, despatched a deal of plain work, and read a world of Greek. When pressed by Archbishop Secker to add a Life of Epictetus to her translation of his works, she replied, 'Whoever that somebody or other is who is to write the Life of Epictetus, seeing I have a dozen shirts to make, I do opine that it cannot be I.'

Shirt-making was not naturally congenial to her, and when she had been working her eyes out, she resolved that if she were ever blessed with a family of boys, they should learn to make their own.

Mrs. Chapone, who pronounced Mrs. Carter to be the first of women, the truest philosopher, and one of the best Christians she ever knew, not only in word but in action, said her great and good character was most appreciated by those familiar with her. She was thought by

many of her admiring acquaintance to be buried at Deal, yet that was the place where she most shone. The applause of the world was not the end or motive of any of her attainments, and she enjoyed her position as much as many of her friends regretted it for her. Failure in such homely abilities as the science of puddings only proved an incentive that eventually caused her to excel. She wrote to Miss Talbot: 'One would think you had a mind to insult me upon a misfortune that happened to me some fifteen years ago, when I produced a pudding of a new invention, so overcharged with pepper and brandy that it put the whole family in a flame. The children all set up their little throats against Greek and Latin, and I found this unlucky event was like to prove my everlasting disgrace, for they made a perfect era of it—every remarkable thing was sure to happen on the day "*my sister made the brandy pudding.*" So, to stop their clamour, I happily applied myself to the forming a special good sweet cake, with such success that the former mishap was forgot, and I was employed to make every christening cake that happened in the family ever after. And though I say it, that should not say it, several

grave, notable gentlewomen of unquestionable good housewifery have applied to me for the receipt. I hope you will not infer that I am fond of brandy, for I put it in out of pure good management to save milk.'

Mrs. Carter and her father seldom met except at meals: each had a separate library and apartment; this continued till his death in 1774, at the age of eighty-seven. To the last he composed a sermon with the same perspicuity and force as at forty. She suffered much anxiety when he insisted on mounting a ladder to prune his vines, for to those advanced in years, and unaccustomed to gymnastics, she considered it hazardous, and saving a few shillings was not worth the risk of giving pain to his family. Some years previously she seems to have entertained hopes of welcoming yet another stepmother, and of thus being relieved of her home duties; she wrote: 'Well, at length my father is arrived from London, and mayhap——. There are some misses coming in all possible expedition to spend some time at Deal. . . . A journey to London, if I live and prosper, in spite of the misses I shall have. My father has been so good as to propose my taking a lodging. . . . He will

soon be in London and fix on a place for me in the environs of St. Paul's.'

The visit of the misses, if it ever took place, proved to be void of significance, and Mrs. Carter continued doing her duty to her father as far as her aching head would allow her.

The premises which Mrs. Carter had purchased at Deal consisted of several adjoining tenements, held under the Archbishop of Canterbury, but by different leases; she wished, therefore, to have them all inserted in one lease. Archbishop Secker granted her request, and wrote:

'Madam Carter,—I am glad to find that you are so prudent. And now it is my turn to show that I am prudent too. As you will save money by the re-union of four houses, I can the better whip you up in your fine, especially as I hear you like your house. Letting me know that, was not quite so discreet. But the wisest in their generation did not become so at once.

'Under so able a master [Lord Bath] as you have had for some months past, I do not doubt but you will come on apace. And who knows how much a few instances of *gude economy* may contribute to bring about a

certain great event that hath been long depending.'

In this letter the Archbishop, alluding to the report that Lord Bath would marry Mrs. Carter, permits himself a few malicious insinuations as to his reported love of money, against which Mrs. Carter had always so ably defended her friend.

The Archbishop, however, when it came to business, acted very generously to his old friend, and when her lease was renewed he would take nothing for it, and sent her word that, as her fine did not satisfy him, he would not receive it, and meant to keep it in his power to arrest her until she could tender him legal payment; to which she replied that her only comfort was that if he screwed her up till she broke nobody would be so great a loser by her bankruptcy as he.

One day, when staying at Lambeth, Mrs. Carter complained to the Archbishop of the unfair manner in which our translators, for the evident purpose of supporting the superiority of the husband, have translated the same Greek verb differently. 'If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not *put her away*. And a

woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not *leave him.*' The Archbishop denied the fact, and asserted that the word in the original was not the same, but finding his antagonist obstinate, said, 'Come with me, Madam Carter, to my study, and be confuted;' they went, and his Grace, instead of being angry when he was proved to be wrong, said good-humouredly, 'No, Madam Carter, 'tis I that must be confuted, and you are right.' Granting, however, that the home belongs to the husband, the translators were surely justified in accentuating the difference between leaving and being turned out.

Archbishop Secker appointed Mrs. Carter's brother-in-law one of his chaplains, and to the end of her days his kindness followed her, even after he was himself long since dead. In 1798 Bishop Porteous, of London, in presenting a living to her nephew, wrote:

'Although you and I have long been very good friends, I don't think I ever had the gallantry to present you with a New Year's gift. I now wish to mend my manners, and as we are both of us a little past our prime, it would not suit either of us to wait very long for any-

thing. I will therefore enter upon a new course (as all penitents ought to do) without delay, and will in one respect at least begin the New Year well by desiring you to accept, as a New Year's Gift, the living of Thorley, in Hertfordshire, for your nephew, Mr. Pennington. In offering you this benefice, I have the great pleasure of testifying my regard for a most excellent lady, whose talents, learning, and piety are an honour to her sex and the age in which she lives; and who is the oldest and most intimate friend of my revered patron, Archbishop Secker, who, were he now living, would not be displeased with this mark of my attention to one whom he most highly esteemed and loved.'

Mrs. Carter wrote a poem on the death of Queen Caroline, wife of George II. (Caroline the Illustrious), which was presented to the King by Sir Robert Walpole, and in Coxe's 'Life of Walpole' it has been erroneously ascribed to Lord Melcombe. Richardson inserted her 'Ode to Wisdom' in his 'Clarissa' without her permission. She complained; he apologised, and explained that, as the ode had been shown to him as written by a lady, he had inserted it to enliven a work that was written

with the intention of doing honour to the sex to the best of his poor abilities. 'Clarissa' was translated into Dutch in 1752, and with it the 'Ode to Wisdom.'

She was a great admirer of Richardson's works, and believed that he was determined to be revenged on the people who thought him too prolix, by a judicious conclusion that left them longing to learn how Clementina was disposed of, and made them wish the book still longer.

Elizabeth Carter's fame spread to the Continent. In 1739, at the age of twenty-two, with her father's consent, she commenced a literary correspondence with Jean Philippe Baratier, that youthful prodigy of learning, who was three years her junior. He wrote several works of theology and ecclesiastical history, and was admitted to the Academy of Science at Berlin when he was fourteen, and died in 1740, aged nineteen. His father was a French Huguenot who settled in Germany, and his mother was a Prussian, so he possessed the great advantage of two nationalities. His letters to Elizabeth Carter expressed an effusive admiration, that must have rather astonished his matter-of-fact correspondent. He was mortified, he said, at not even seeing her portrait, and

knew not if she were a fair or brown beauty. Her actual presence he feared would be dangerous, but he hoped she was not tall, as, being small himself, he found many perfections in short stature. The Latin epigram, written by 'La nymphe Elize,' he declared filled him with envy, and Heaven knew if he would not end by hating her cordially. No doubt she had stolen her verses from Apollo, and passed them off as her own, but 'a nymph of her merit' was one of the most dangerous creatures under Heaven, for she might with four lines wound a man in Pekin. For his own part, he said, he preferred Chinese to Latin, in which perhaps he was wise, as in that language at least his fair competitor was out of her depth. In his determination to learn English he worked like a horse, or rather, like an author compiling his own index. One of his sentences indeed appeared to him to be so long and involved as to be almost English. 'Car vous faites des affreuses périodes, vous autres Anglais; je m'y perds, j'y suffoque, et quel tourment pour un Français.' He sent her a copy of his History of the first Bishops of Rome, but added 'n'allez pas me jouer le tour de le lire.' Like Dr. Johnson, he thought that books presented by the

author are less read and valued than if the reader has been at some pains to acquire them himself. This promising young life was cut short the following year.

The Empress Catherine expressed high admiration of Mrs. Carter's translation of Epictetus, and in Russia, where Mrs. Carter said the people were just learning to walk on their hind legs, there appeared in the 'Sotschinenie : ou Mélanges de Littérature en Russe, pour le mois de Mai, 1758':

'Anecdotes au Sujet d'une savante Fille en Angleterre, Mademoiselle Elizabeth Carter, qui vient de donner au public une belle traduction en Anglais de tous les ouvrages d'Epictète. Elle est fille de Nicholas Carter, Docteur en Théologie, établi à Deal, ville maritime, dans le Comté de Kent. Cet ecclésiastique, homme de beaucoup de piété et d'érudition, remarquant dans sa fille de très heureuses dispositions, résolut de ne rien négliger de ce qui pourrait contribuer à son éducation. Mais, craignant avec raison que ces avantages ne produisissent en elle une sotte vanité, il s'appliqua à lui inspirer des sentiments d'humanité et de modestie, et surtout une piété éclairée et solide.

'Mademoiselle Carter possède le Latin, le

Grec, l'Anglois, le François, l'Italien et l'Espagnol ; et elle lit l'Hebreu et l'Allemand. Elle serait trop accomplie, si à toutes ces qualités était joint un extérieur également parfait (quoiqu'elle soit assez agréable) avec de plus grands avantages du côté de la fortune. Mais son tempérament, son goût pour la simplicité, et enfin une philosophie soutenue et épurée par la religion, lui font presque regarder toutes ces choses d'un œil de Stoïque.

'30me de Mai 1758.'

Elizabeth Carter was not ambitious to attain fame by affecting new discoveries in religion or morals, but her sound principles were the result of research and conviction, and secured her own happiness, while it added to that of her fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIETY

Mrs. Carter equally condemned a life passed in perpetual society or in perpetual solitude. Social pleasures at proper intervals stimulated her mind and spirits, but she wearied of constant dissipation, and home alone presented the joyful means of rest and recreation. Variety, she considered, is best adapted to the human mind during its life of probation. Only as a rest from work can repose be enjoyed. Queen Elizabeth acknowledged two methods of bringing our years to an end, 'wearing out' and 'rusting out,' but those who neither know how to work nor how to rest contrive to do both, and that very rapidly. They loiter through the day in a purposeless activity, and boast that they never rest. Their weeks, like their days, are unbroken by the alternate work and rest appointed to man, and if, after having transgressed

the law of work for six days, they attempt to rest for conscience' sake on the seventh, they find it very dull. It was not made for the unemployed. If circumstances, said Epictetus, make it necessary for us to live alone, we should enjoy tranquillity and freedom, and not complain of solitude. If we find ourselves in a crowd we should cheerfully endure the trouble and uneasiness, and not treat our neighbours as knaves and robbers. We cannot escape from men, nor can we change them, so we should regard an assembly of them as a festival. At times God wills that we should be at leisure to meditate, write, read, hear, and prepare ourselves. When we have had sufficient time He says, 'Come to the contest; now is the opportunity for you to prove whether you are worthy of victory, or whether you are among those who go about the world defeated.' No contest is without confusion, and some will plead that their only desire is to live quietly. To such weak, discontented folk, who dishonour God's summons, Epictetus answers contemptuously, 'Lament, then, and groan as you deserve to do, be grieved, envious, disappointed, and unhappy.' He despises the impotent wailings of those who have not had the courage to take their part

in life, and cry 'I am in a wretched condition, master, and I am unfortunate; no man cares for me, no man gives me anything, all blame me, all speak ill of me.'

In her youth, Mrs. Carter would not have chosen to live year after year upon the same spot, in the same contracted circle, had it been in her power to do otherwise. She thought it important to mix now and then in the hurry of society, in order to keep up with the 'universal community of mankind,' to enlarge and vary her ideas, and thus become more useful and agreeable to those with whom she lived than it is possible to be if leading an absolutely regular clockwork life, always moved by the same springs and perpetually striking the same note. The wisest and best of the human race must sometimes need to be diverted from their own thoughts and feelings; and in town opportunities are every hour at hand. Those refined and cultivated minds that depend little on external entertainment are liable to despise the amusements that are necessary to keep others in good humour. There is a danger of their becoming 'odd, out-of-the-way people to whom the important affair of a masquerade is a grievous task, nothing but good sense, and true

purposes of living an amusement, and all the gay bagatelles of folly, immense labour, and vexation of spirit.' Feeling no want themselves, such minds may be disappointed not to find in the generality of mankind the reasonable intelligence that belongs to very few. Consequently those who might elevate society are often inclined to run away from it. 'After all,' she concludes, 'the men and women of this world must have their rattles and their playthings, and the only way people of superior talents can hope to make them wiser and better is by condescending to play with them. Remember that Socrates and Plato frequented all the routs, visiting rooms and raree-shows in Athens, or they would never have gained so many proselytes to virtue.' Socrates even learnt to dance at an advanced age.

The pleasures of a 'volatile head' are at any rate much less liable to disappointment than those of a 'sensible heart.' For such as can be contented with rattles and raree-shows there are rattles and raree-shows in abundance, and when one is broken, it is mighty easily replaced by another.

Though Mrs. Carter had a strange, stubborn, constitutional disposition to be pleased that

BOOK-PLATE OF ELIZABETH CARTER

made her sociable and tolerant, she suffered all her life from weak nerves and fluttering pulses, constitutional evils, for which she foresaw no cure but in the regions of immortality. Her shyness aggravated by short sight made it impossible, she complained, to divest herself of her idiot look, though self-control enabled her to enter a room with 'a very graceful intrepidity.' With an aching head and twitching limbs, she went about the world active, useful, cheerful, and thankful, and showed none of those symptoms of bad nerves, well described as a 'term one is pleased to give to the indulgence of ill humour that disgraces one's best principles, grieves one's best friends, and makes one's whole being ungrateful. A disposition that, though troublesome and teasing to others, so scratches and tears the poor owner, that it is more worthy our compassion than we are willing to allow.' The most nervous people frequently appear the most composed, and sudden fear only makes them calmer. They have learnt to exercise that self-control, without which they would be like the Roman, described by Epictetus, who wrapped up his head when his favourite horse was running, and when, contrary to his fears, it won, the revulsion of his

feelings was so strong that sponges were required to recover him from a fainting fit. Housebreakers, Dr. Johnson allowed, may have just cause for fear, as they may be 'shot getting into a house, or hanged when they get out of it,' but ordinary mortals should control their nerves.

Though Mrs. Carter might appear tranquil, she said, 'people who make it a point never to squall, and do not often speak, have nevertheless their feelings.' If she had not been a Christian she would have been a 'Stoic, a metaphysician, a bear and a wit.' When her solitude was occasionally turned into hurry and company, to which she had been long disused, she felt like a wild thing just caught, and doubted if in her fright she would not run into holes and corners like a wild kitten. In the midst of all these foolish flutters she wrote: 'I bless myself for being placed in a situation which seldom exposes me to them, and born to a position neither of hard labour nor the equally fatiguing one of splendid slavery.' None but those who enjoy it can have any idea of the comfort of insignificancy. She often secretly exulted in the privilege of being suffered to go in and out of a room with as much silence

and as little ceremony as a cat, while people of more consequence were kept at a distance by the forms and fashions of this world, and could only strain their eyes by looking at each other through a telescope. Excess of good housewifery had prevented her ever making use of the fan, and it was so long since she had appeared without either a shuttle or needle in her hands, that she would be utterly at a loss what to do with them, and in her perplexity, regardless how she disposed of her feet, she would infallibly tumble over her nose. Miss Talbot considered it her duty to get rid of this awkwardness. 'Learn the exercise of the fan,' she said; 'I will furnish you with fan-mounts.'

Unfortunately Mrs. Carter's modesty and straightforwardness lessened her influence in raising the general tone of society. Like all shy people she loved listening better than talking. The world has no leisure to attend to the wisest if they are backward and diffident in asserting their opinions. Dr. Johnson, when assured that a man to whom he had just been introduced would grow very entertaining presently, calmly answered, 'Sir, I can wait.'

Lady Louisa Stuart tells us that Mrs. Carter

not only lacked a quick perception of her neighbours' absurdities, but was equally free from any desire to expose them. She sat still, honestly admiring what a livelier but shallower person would have criticised and ridiculed.

It was not the glitter and finery of this world that awed Elizabeth Carter, for even at Deal, where folks were nearly all on a level, she was as much flurried as in the most splendid assembly; on the contrary, she was no doubt more at her ease with well-bred people, whatever position they chanced to occupy, as the best bred are invariably those 'who make the fewest persons uneasy.' Her head, she declared, was fortunately a very unimportant one in the world of literature or business, so that it might act '*sans consequence*,' and with half a ray of twilight she was able to pass her day, resting her aching head upon a pillow, or indulge in the alleviations of an elbow-chair.

An occasional visit to her uncle, a wealthy silk merchant living in St. Paul's Churchyard, was her only experience of city life during her early years; there, panting for breath in the smoke of London, she read, wrote, sung, played, hopped and amused herself as well as

she could, and every afternoon walked as if she were bewitched to keep herself in health. Though a tragic account of the alteration in her size and complexion might reach her friends at Deal, so that they would expect to see her as pale and thin as Dean Swift's Daphne, she felt confident that a month's fresh sea air would restore her to 'the impolite colouring of a milkmaid.'

She was carried off to see the Royal Society by one of the Fellows, and returned half choked with the venerable dust of the Arundelian Library. She was much entertained with looking over the old manuscripts, and would have been well pleased to be locked up there for a week. The Museum was finely decorated with the most frightful productions in Nature—spiders, crocodiles, rattlesnakes, and sea-calves. Then there were such rarities as Julius Cæsar's wife's maid's grandmother's hat, and a Lapland pagod, that had to be protected from injuries from dust and spiders.

Her translation of Epictetus not only made her independent and enabled her to pass every winter in lodgings in Clarges Street, but it was also the means of introducing her to the whole 'Army of Blues.' With Mrs. Montagu, their

'queen,' she had been acquainted from childhood, as many of her early years had been passed at Horton, near Hythe.

'My London life,' Elizabeth Carter wrote, 'has not that hurry and bustle it might have if I was of more importance. My insignificance exempts me from forms and ceremonies to which higher situations are subject; my hours pass quietly in the society of my friends, and, without mixing in what is called the world, I partake of that vivacity which always enlivens conversation in a great metropolis.' Unfortunately she heard too many 'smart things' to remember any. If she were only now and then to discover some bright thought shooting like a star through the gloom of a dull conversation its singularity would have struck her so forcibly that she might be able to retain it, but being constantly in the midst of one continued cloudless sunshine, her eyes were dazzled and at a loss where to fix their gaze.

She declined to stay with any of her friends, as she said she must have somewhere to rest her aching head without giving trouble, and have some hours of the day to call her own. When merely paying a visit, she felt quite 'out of the track' of her proper employ-

ments, for it is only '*chez-soi*' that books, pencils, and pens are within reach, and ease and convenience she found nowhere but in her own house. With her friends she was drawn into all the hurry of other people's affairs. In the universal uproar and flutter, every room, closet, corner cupboard—nay, the very bird-cages—seemed full of people. She felt like 'a dog in a dancing-school,' her brains were in an everlasting rotation, and whirled round so quick, there was no distinguishing one thing from another. When up to her ears in all this trumpery her 'upper room' was quite in disorder, littered all over with bits and ends of half-formed thoughts, which kept fluttering about, and would take her an age to set right again.

As for writing, she found herself temporarily accommodated with her mathematical box for a 'standish,' and a harpsichord for a table, but

> 'Not the desk with silver nails,
> Nor bureau of expense,
> Nor standish finely gilt avails
> To writing common sense.'

She could only hope that her periods would run half as musically as her hostess's spinet, but she feared her letter would contain nothing

but words. Greater philosophy was required to sit calmly down and pen a grave epistle when mortal ears were enchanted by these soft sounds, than to remain unmoved in the midst of earthquakes and inundations. When all the world was gone to an assembly, she consoled herself with the thought of how much happier she was in bed, even with a headache, while her friends were at the assembly, than she would have been at the assembly if they had been at home in bed. On one of these occasions a friend, who had gone to a ball, promised that she should be called up to drink tea with her when she returned in the morning, but in the meantime her repose was disturbed by the chimney catching fire. The hostess, assisted by two maids, ran about extinguishing it with brooms, and looking like the witches in Macbeth. So peace is not always ensured even to those who eschew the world. Sometimes at night she would write long letters to her friends and break off in the middle of a sentence ('dear, how the watchman made me jump!'), and she would conclude 'My candle is out, so Good-night!' For sleepless nights she had Young's 'Night Thoughts,' and regretted there were not more than seven nights

in the week, unlike the lady who, when she had reached the fifth, exclaimed, 'What! will that man have never done complaining?'

Mrs. Carter did not care for the pompous suite of apartments lighted up for the joyless drum, but liked a number of large comfortable rooms, well furnished, and warmed with good fires, where an intelligent circle of friends met every evening. Though she could perfectly conceive the joy of talking to a thousand people during half the day, she heartily pitied those who did not spend the other half 'quietly and decently in the sober conversation of books.' She never dined at home, unless prevented by illness from going out. The chairs and carriages of her friends were always sent to fetch her to dinner, and brought her back at ten at the latest. Though she thought it wrong to debar people from 'the comfortable privilege of playing the fool,' she would have wished the revival of the curfew, so that any assembly of folks out of their own habitations after ten o'clock at night might be deemed a riot. This would save many an aching head, and perhaps, too, an aching heart, and introduce much good order and economy into the world. For her own part, she fluttered up and down the world in

the height of good spirits, which she never lavished away by keeping 'bad hours,' for except on public occasions ten o'clock was her invariable rule.

Though the season broke up towards the end of May, Mrs. Carter declared that winter in London lasted till July, but then, she added, you have the comfort of spending it among creatures of your own species and in your own way, while the rest of the world are catching cold in the country by fancying that June and July must be summer. In the country no one appreciated the blessing of a fine day more than she did. A French philosopher, in the short compass of ninety pages, had accurately demonstrated that the weather which is particularly favourable to the growth of cabbages is downright poison to the human genius, but in town she considered fair weather 'no otherwise' than as a matter of convenience to keep her out of the dirt. From any other view one day in the city was just as good as another.

She sometimes visited the moon and stars at Lambeth, where they were rather more visible than in the smoke of London, but even there the atmosphere was very different from that of the country.

Mrs. Carter did not agree with her friend, Miss Talbot, who complained that there was an enchantment in the air of London which made people avoid each other the moment they found themselves in that vile place, who previously had been wishing above all things to meet, and that those happy hours spent with agreeable friends in all the ease and freedom of familiar intercourse, not on trifles such as 'actors and dramas,' but on subjects worthy of the attention of reasonable creatures, was a sort of society that seemed to be extinct. In the country, Miss Talbot lamented, we cannot have it because the people are not there, and in town we cannot have it because everybody is daily engaged in some public place.

Mrs. Carter, on the contrary, in the brightest splendour of summer suns, looked forward with joy to the dark days of January and the smoke of London. 'If I had no other motive,' she exclaimed, 'to bring me to London than to avoid the hollow blasts of the wind, I could sit through the wintry months listening to the tempests, and looking at the dashing ocean with great tranquillity, but Dr. Johnson says, "London is the land of ideas," and I say that it is the land of friendship.'

'Few people give themselves time to be friends,' she said, 'or allow themselves to be as wise, good and happy as Heaven designed them to be, even in their present state.' In the congenial society of her intimate circle she discussed a number of subjects that never entered into the heads of people who were 'sick of no other distemper but the vertigo of the world;' such pleasures are never experienced by those to whom amusement is a toilsome business. They may have, as Epictetus said, 'their vessels of gold, but their discourse, their principles, their assents, their pursuits, their desires are of mere earthenware.' They can never attain to his ideal, and become 'perfected and polished like a statue, doing nothing unworthy of the artist who made it, and showing themselves modest, noble, and free from perturbation.' According to Epictetus the 'only way of escaping from the slavery of the world is found by those who can say with all their soul,

> '"Lead me, O Zeus! and thou, O destiny!
> The way that I am bid by you to go."'

She delighted in the constant cheerfulness and ease she experienced in the company of friends who neither gave nor felt any of those

little groundless disquietudes with which people are apt to tease those whom they most sincerely love. Their very quarrels were vastly amusing, for they used to quarrel sometimes, but with so little resentment on either side that it only served as a diversion.

'It is no doubt a very reasonable wish,' she said, 'that the whole creation should contribute to our amusement, and no impediment ever stand in the way of our enjoying at one season the conversation of our friends, and at another the song of the nightingales and the bloom of roses, one pleasure being thus immediately replaced by another. A fine system this, and one extremely well adapted to the undeviating rectitude of the race of Adam! After all, we must be content to take things as they are, and it is from our own folly if they are not mighty well.'

For the sake of health Mrs. Carter walked sometimes in the Mall during the fine weather, but, though there was plenty of gossip to be had there, she seldom heard anything 'very smart.' The following is a specimen of the wit that satisfied the fine folk, but that she feared to spoil by a blundering repetition:

Lady ——, whose unhappy married life was

notorious, was very ill, and, fearing that her lord would show 'the triumph of hope over experience,' by rushing headlong into another union, told him that she would not mind dying if she were not afraid of a successor who was the devil's eldest daughter. 'Your ladyship may be perfectly easy about that,' answered my lord, 'for it is against the canon for any man to marry two sisters.'

Grotius says that 'All are fools who do appear to be such, and one half of those who do not.'

If human nature, Mrs. Carter thought, were estimated by the figure it makes in history, the result would be extremely mortifying, but it would be as fair to judge the elements by some earthquake, that once in a century lays waste half a province, whilst successive years of plenty pass unrecorded. History recounts the violent passions and perverse principles that effect revolutions, but takes no notice of the regular tenor of common life.

Such a man as Sir James Macdonald, with his great and noble schemes for the civilisation and improvement of his property in the Isle of Skye (to which end he acquired the Erse language), and, at twenty, possessed the

knowledge and experience of age, was exceptional, but he had as much right to be regarded as representing his class as the opposite extreme, those Macaroni gentlemen who wore artificial nosegays, and were 'surely a species of animal and not an English character.' Such a composition of monkey and demon as at one half of the day appeared to be studying all the tricks of the most trifling and contemptible foppery, and at the other was raving and blaspheming at a gaming table, was surely an aggregate of all the follies and all the crimes that a worthless head and profligate heart could collect from all parts of the globe.

A sermon was preached at Bath to a congregation of fine people; the clergyman took for his text, 'I speak this to your shame,' and told them he heartily concurred with St. Paul. He drew such a picture of their life and conversation that, if it did not make them ashamed, made them very angry. Mrs. Carter considered gambling, extravagance, neglect of domestic order, the inversion of day and night, and the hurry of perpetual crowds, equal disqualifications for the duties of a rational life. Associating with all kinds of characters destroys a due regard to reputation, and weakens that

distinction between right and wrong which it is of infinite importance to preserve. Into what is called the world, she said, no true penitent would have the effrontery to try to enter. A female gamester seemed to her a blot in nature. 'Pray,' she asked, 'could you ever discover who gets the money that is lost? I never remember hearing of above two or three people who made a fortune by gaming. Does Satan sweep the stakes and carry off the winnings? At least one never heard they were anywhere extant on earth. It would be well if no honest tradespeople were hurt, but their lawful debts are the last thing people of this stamp ever think of paying.'

The round of diversion at Bath is described by Dr. Carter in a letter written to his daughter, when he accompanied his Kentish neighbours, Sir George and Lady Oxenden, to that fashionable resort. Tuesday and Friday evenings there were balls; Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday assemblies; and every night there was gaming of all sorts. On Sunday evenings all profane diversions gave way to tea-drinking! The company met in the Pump Room to drink the waters in the morning, and were entertained with music. 'For my own

part,' wrote the Doctor, 'though I generally attend these meetings, I stay not long at them, but read, walk, and converse with Sir George, which is the chief part of my pleasure. Last Monday night a bloody fray happened betwixt the footmen and the bath-chair-men, which put the ladies into a great consternation. The contest was sharp but not long, and the success very doubtful. The footmen had the advantage in numbers, and the chair-men in the goodness of their weapons. The damage of both sides is computed to be the breaking of half a dozen heads, and the windows of forty chairs, so that there has been more business for the glazier than the surgeon. Sir George met with a little brush upon his leg; Lady Oxenden and I just escaped.'

During her early years Elizabeth Carter joined the movement, originated by Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Chapone, to substitute conversation for cards. She was delighted when her old friend Horace Walpole succeeded to the earldom of Orford, and immediately begged him 'to get an Act of Parliament for putting down faro.' 'As if I could make Acts of Parliament!' exclaimed Lord Orford, whose power as an hereditary legislator was so greatly over-

rated. The attempt would have ill become one who 'for some years played more faro than anybody.'

'I played commerce last night,' wrote Mrs. Carter in 1741, 'and made such wonderful improvement as to know that clubs are red, hearts black, and that the knave is the highest card in the whole pack, with many other particulars too tedious to mention, only I was willing to give you a specimen of my extraordinary genius. However, I lost every counter, and retired into a corner with other unfortunate gamesters, to bewail my lot and tell quaint stories.'

'For the punishment of my iniquities,' she wrote on another occasion, 'I was once drawn into a—what shall I call it? a drum, a rout, a racket, a hurricane, an uproar, a something in short that was the utter confusion of all sense and meaning, where every charm of conversation was drove away by that foe to human society—whist; in a word, where I was kept up muzzing and half dead with sleep and vexation till one in the morning, and from that time made a resolution in whatever company I met a pack of cards to *fly from it as from the face of a serpent.*

I have often borne such a situation among people I was indifferent to, but it is beyond mortal sufferance to see those capable of the most enlivening entertainment look as stupid as dormice, and whenever they did speak, it was in a language utterly unintelligible.' Miss Talbot, to whom she addressed this complaint, only objected to cards when they became the business of life and the bane of conversation ; in mixed company she reverenced them, and amongst a good-humoured set of people that were not conversible, she really loved them. Mrs. Carter subsequently modified her views, and in her old age enjoyed a quiet rubber.

People who fancy themselves busy, running from one crowded room to another, wearing their spirits and ruining their health with late hours and splendid entertainments, or wasting life in wild ambition or dishonest gain, are, she declared, the truly idle, and not those who, by cheerful relaxation from useful industry, one part of the day provide themselves with health to perform with comfort and spirit the duties of the other.

Mrs. Carter was full of insular prejudices, and considered the new French ambassador,

M. de Noailles, who came to England about 1770, very superior to some of the 'frippery, dancing, smuggling things, which the French Court sometimes send to amuse our Masters and Misses, and scandalise people of sober sense.' French ladies, she found, were not invariably *over*-dressed: they occasionally, even to her mind, erred on the side of simplicity. During the French Revolution, Madame C. de Noailles escaped, disguised as a sailor, and hid in the hold of the vessel, covered with ropes. On her arrival she had but one single shift with her, and in that and Lady Clermont's powdering gown she dined with the Prince of Wales. In London, Mrs. Carter found that life without fashion was reckoned but 'mere breathing,' and though she had attained to a considerable reputation at Deal in point of dress, she was sorrowfully convinced since her arrival in town of her great deficiency in that important affair. The 'embellishment of her externals, therefore, became her ardent pursuit, and she endeavoured to make a gallant appearance in a dress of black silk, but to aspire to any perfection in the science of clothes would be, she said, 'acting out of character.' She rarely mentions the subject, except to protest indignantly when an

artificial bouquet was considered necessary to the perfecting of her exterior. 'Judge, then,' she exclaimed, 'what an animal I must be!' Mr. Cave regretted that Richard Savage, who expressed such warm admiration for her character, had never seen her in a certain little straw hat. As to her personal appearance, probably the Russian newspaper, quoted in the preceding chapter, gives the truest account when it declares that she was 'assez bien,' but that her charms would have been enhanced by rather an increased supply of beauty and fortune.

At one of Mrs. Vesey's parties Mrs. Carter met that singular but worthy character, Lord Monboddo, author of the 'Origin and Progress of Language,' &c.; he was dressed in a pompadour-coloured coat, and a large white grizzle wig, and was the most fashionable object in all polite circles. He had 'writt to prove' that human creatures in their natural state have tails like a cat, for he gravely maintained that men were originally monkeys, possessing neither speech nor reason, and was the first to direct attention to the origin of Darwinism and Neo-Kantism. As Mrs. Carter was sitting in a cool corner among some quiet people of her own sort, without tails, Mrs. Vesey dragged

her into a hot crowd that was listening to my Lord Monboddo, and had no sooner stuck her at his elbow, than he went off to another part of the room, whereupon she walked back *re infecta* to her corner. He was pleasant and unassuming, with an astonishing quantity of erudition, an enthusiast in Greek literature and a worshipper of Homer. Notwithstanding his learning and talents, he declared he had received more information during the time he had conversed with society in London than he ever found before. Though unable to acquire the tail of his ancestors, Lord Monboddo endeavoured, as far as the laws of society would permit, to enjoy their freedom, by taking a daily air-bath in his room, where he walked unattired with the windows open.

Mrs. Carter's own appearance at one of Mrs. Vesey's assemblies is thus described in the year 1785 by Elizabeth Sheridan :

'Our circle was increased by the arrival of Mrs. Carter ; on her being announced you may suppose my whole attention was turned to the door. She seems about sixty [she was really sixty-eight] and is rather fat ; she is no way striking in her appearance, and was dressed in a scarlet gown and petticoat, with a plain undress

cap and perfectly flat head. A small work-bag was hanging at her arm, out of which she drew some knitting as soon as she was seated; but with no fuss or airs. She entered into the conversation with that ease which persons have when both their thoughts and words are at command, and with no toss of the head, no sneer, no emphatic look, in short no affected consequence of any kind.'

That our heroine when verging on seventy should have elected to clothe herself in scarlet is rather a shock, but her 'perfectly flat head' only implies that she did not adopt the 'towering *Babel*onian' head-dress crowned with feathers then in vogue. She was always more sociable and easy when there were few people, and avoided entertainments where, as Hannah More said, '200 persons met together, dressed in the extremity of fashion; painted as red as bacchanals; poisoning the air with perfumes; treading on each other's gowns; making the crowd they blame; not one in ten able to get a chair; protesting they are engaged in ten other places, and lamenting the fatigue they are not obliged to endure.'

When Epictetus was annoyed by the rudeness, the pushing, the abuse, and the thievish

propensities of his fellow-creatures at the public baths, he did not lose his temper—or, at least, he recommended his followers not to lose theirs—for, he said, 'It is more important you should keep your will in harmony with nature than that you should bathe.'

Neither Epictetus nor his translator could foresee the congested state of modern society, or imagine that at the Court of Queen Victoria a crowd, largely composed of well-bred women, would have to be restrained by solid barriers, guarded by Gentlemen-at-Arms, from storming each line of defence as they approached the Royal presence. During the early years of the present reign the scene of conflict was happily changed to the outer hall of the palace, which enabled loyal subjects to pass their Majesties unruffled by the fray. The sight of beauty in distress during the struggle that ensued as the crowd departed sometimes melted the large heart of a stalwart Life-Guardsman. With grim humour he would allow an importunate fair one to pass, knowing that her farther progress was barred by a solid barrier of high seats that no persuasion could move, and that impeded by train and veil it would be impossible to negotiate. Baffled and dejected,

she would soon be craving re-admission to the seething mass of dishevelled humanity, from which she had lately prayed to be delivered.

Mrs. Carter always wished our Empire restrained to Great Britain and Ireland. A large extent of territory placed beyond the grasp of the seat of empire ever has been, and ever will be, she considered, the ruin of the mother country. Though the loss of the American colonies occasioned great convulsions, she predicted that in the next age the nation would be the happier for being rid of them. On the subject of American Independence she felt much like the Frenchman who said, 'Nous sommes écrasés, nous sommes abîmés, et nous allons à l'opéra.'

She described the uproar occasioned in London by the eclipse in July 1748 as inconceivable; the very beggars in the streets insulted folks who refused to give them small beer, by threatening them that the Day of Judgment would be next Thursday.

She felt much concerned at the imprisonment of a negro for calling himself 'esquire.' She had never heard of anybody being taken up for calling himself a scholar, or a critic, or

a man of honour, and yet how many went about the world in unmolested possession of these titles to which they had no better right than her poor friend to his esquireship.

As an onlooker the petty vanities of society amused her. Besides other impertinences essential to the character of a fine lady she noted a peculiar kind of vanity, which displayed itself in a perpetual alteration of the will, for which purpose one of her acquaintance contracted with a lawyer by the year. 'Tis not,' she said, 'that the woman has any love for the people she puts in, or resentment against those she scratches out, but a determination to show her power; and those who would get anything by her must catch her at her last gasp.'

Lord Chesterfield's cynicism, however, rather disappointed a *virtuoso* of his acquaintance, who bought an old picture of a man and woman and two boys, and observing the Stanhope arms in one corner, presented it to my lord, imagining he would be delighted to have a proof of the antiquity of his family. To prevent all disputes of precedency for the future, my lord, who treated this sort of vanity very whimsically, inscribed under the figures, 'Adam Stanhope, of Eden Garden, Egypt, and Eve

Stanhope, his wife, with their two sons, Cain Stanhope and Abel Stanhope.' His genealogy would have been indisputable if he had put Seth Stanhope instead of Cain.

That self-advertisement and pose without which no one, though possessing the beauty of Venus herself, would fill the rôle of a professional beauty she severely censured; the very term, which is supposed to have been invented towards the end of the nineteenth century, was applied by Mrs. Carter to the Miss Gunnings, of whom she wrote: 'Indeed a beauty by profession is a kind of being much too hurrying and *bruyant* not to overset all the tranquil ideas of sequestered life, and is supportable only in its proper element—a crowded town assembly.' She agreed that nothing makes people tired of a fine face but a want of something in the mind and character, and its being seen everywhere in that idle, fluttering way, that makes half the fine faces in England old and neglected in a twelvemonth.

She considered mere constitutional good humour and civility mighty pretty decorations for an afternoon visit, but at home, or in the important duties of life, they are of little avail, if the behaviour is regulated only by a system

of mere 'savoir vivre.' For the value of each action depends on its being performed in obedience to the will of God. Our powers are inconceivably increased and the most trifling acts acquire dignity from a sense of duty. When good people are lacking in courtesy, they are certainly so far deficient in goodness.

The carelessness of extreme youth is no doubt an excuse in many instances for want of consideration, 'and beauty much admired' often chokes better feelings; but the mind will have its hours of repose in spite of fashion, and then all the better seeds, which were early sown, will spring up and bear fruit.

From the society of politicians Mrs. Carter found she received much more literary information than from scholars and authors, who on one occasion ranged themselves on one side of the room, leaving the ladies to twirl their shuttles and amuse each other as they could. From what little she overheard of their conversation she learnt that they were discoursing on the old English poets, a subject that did not seem much beyond her female capacity. These men of letters did not show even the courtesy of two individuals of 'the squire kind,' with whom she travelled in a coach, whose discourse for

the whole day turned on horses and dogs, except now and then a word upon the weather, dust, and heat, out of pure condescension to her limited powers of conversation. Dr. Carter's Kentish neighbour and literary friend, Sir George Oxenden, warned Elizabeth in her youth that there was hardly an instance of a woman of letters entering into an intimacy with men of wit and parts—particularly poets —who were not afterwards abused and maltreated by them in print. Mr. Pope, he said, had done so more than once. Her father added, 'As you never abuse others, you may hope not to be abused. Hold your own, but without any appearance of ill-nature or contempt.' She always maintained that the unjust manner in which Pope had been attacked excused any apparent malice on his own part.

She regretted the more powerful avocations that caused Burke to quit the tranquil pleasures of the select 'Bas Bleu' society for the turbulent schemes of ambition and the tricks of political life ; he rarely found time to step in to their assemblies, where, if he marked no one with whom he wished to exchange ideas, he would seize the first book or pamphlet he could catch to sooth his harassed mind by reading a

passage or two aloud. 'He did not talk,' Johnson said, 'from a desire of distinction, but because his mind was full. A man who is used to the applause of the House of Commons has no wish for that of private company. A man accustomed to throw for a thousand pounds, if set down to throw for sixpence, would not be at the pains to count his dice.' Burke's talk was 'the ebullition of his mind.'

Throughout her life Mrs. Carter never came much in contact with the Royal family, but in 1791 Queen Charlotte expressed a desire that she should be presented to her at Lady Cremorne's house in Chelsea. She also received visits from the Princess of Wales and the Duke of Cumberland at her house at Deal.

The pleasure Mrs. Carter found in society was intelligent intercourse with real friends, and, as this enjoyment was not limited to the fleeting season of youth, she could prepare for growing old with a good grace, and never became contemptible to society, or burdensome and disagreeable to her friends. She was described as a really noble-looking woman; age had rarely been so gracefully seen in the female sex; her face was a benediction; goodness and philanthropy beamed in the placid serenity of

her interesting countenance. Thackeray in his 'Virginians' mentions Mrs. Carter amongst the most attractive women of her day. When Sir George Warrington succeeded to his uncle's estates he soon wearied of his surroundings, and the only possession he contemplated with unmixed satisfaction was his wife, who had shared his poverty in his 'dear little cottage at Lambeth.' Though reminding her somewhat pompously how immeasurably inferior she was to the women he might have married, with the spirit of the Turk that is said to lurk in all Englishmen, he allowed that she *did* very well. 'I have never cared,' he said, 'for another woman. I have seen more beautiful, but none that suited me as well as your ladyship. I have met Mrs. Carter and Miss Mulso [Mrs. Chapone], Mrs. Thrale, and Mme. Kaufmann, and the angelical Gunnings, and her Grace of Devonshire, and a host of beauties who were not angelic by any means; and I was not dazzled by them.'

It was impossible not to be better as well as happier for an intimate acquaintance with Mrs. Carter; the most insignificant people she inspired with confidence in themselves, by showing them how to regulate their minds, as well as their actions, by the power of will.

Mrs. Carter's talk was all upon books ; of life and manners, Fanny Burney declared she was as ignorant as a nun. If certain phases of them escaped her observation, the oversight happily contributed to her optimism ; her shrewdness and common sense were undoubted. Dr. Johnson questioned if much consolation is to be drawn from seeing life as it is, but, he added, 'that drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable.' Possessing few of the surroundings and ties that in the eyes of the world represent happiness, Mrs. Carter exemplified the maxim that to be good is to be happy. 'Happy she certainly was beyond the race of women.' Mrs. Chapone observed a 'few dear comfortable signs of weakness' in her which were attractive, because the most endearing ties of society arise from mutual indulgence of each other's failings. She kept out of an easy-chair as long as possible, and was content to take the blessings of friendship and affection, with the inevitable tax of anxiety, that is wisely imposed on them, till we wake amidst a society from which we can dread no future separation.

CHAPTER VII

DR. JOHNSON

For Dr. Johnson Mrs. Carter had a very great esteem. She had enjoyed his friendship for nearly fifty years. He had been introduced to her by Mr. Cave, editor of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' On this event her father wrote to her on June 25, 1738: 'You mention Johnson; but that is a name with which I am utterly unacquainted. Neither his scholastic, critical, or poetical character ever reached my ears. I a little suspect his judgment if he is very fond of Martial.' In one of her last conversations with Dr. Johnson, when she was expressing her approval of his unswerving adherence to religion, and admiration for his sound principles, he took her by the hand, and said with great eagerness, 'You know this to be true; testify it to the world when I am gone.'

She blamed his biographers for recording

arguments he had maintained only for the sake of victory, which did not convey his genuine sentiments, for he held that a man should be able to argue equally well on either side. His real opinions, she declared, were to be found in his works.

His 'Lives of the Poets,' which had lost him the friendship of many eminent people, did not alter her steadfast regard for him; all that it contained of envy or ill-nature she attributed to a morbid irritability of the nerves, brought on by bodily suffering.

Referring to their first acquaintance, he wrote to her: 'To every joy is appended a sorrow. The name of Miss Carter introduces the memory of Cave. Poor dear Cave! I owed him much; for to him I owe that I have known you.' Dr. Johnson concluded one of his letters to her with the expression of a respect 'which I neither owe nor pay to any other.' Having dined at Mrs. Garrick's in the society of Mrs. Carter, Hannah More, and Fanny Burney, he declared, 'Three such women are not to be found; I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all.' So much excellence, however, seems to have been rather

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

oppressive, for when Boswell exclaimed, 'What! had you them all to yourself, sir?' he answered, 'I had them all, as much as they were to be had; but it might have been better had there been more company there.'

Dr. Johnson was Mrs. Carter's favourite author. Of his notes on Shakespeare she wrote, 'I will not undertake his defence as a commentator, but his work is valuable for many strokes of his own great, refined and delicate way of thinking. With all his encomiums on our Bishop [Warburton], he sometimes, in the most polite and elegant language, treats him more severely than his open enemies; these have

> '"Kicked and cuffed, and split, and tore and rent,
> And done they know not what, in their avengement,"

but the pen of Dr. Johnson, like the ethereal stroke of lightning, without any external mark of violence has penetrated to his vitals.'

Dr. Johnson, she said, had no vanity, and there was never a human mind more regardless of censure and applause. This excused the want of tenderness he had shown for the weaknesses of others, though a knowledge of mankind should have taught him that people

whose minds are not of the same impenetrable firmness may suffer by having their blundering and folly exposed with such unmitigated severity.

He once, however, had the satisfaction of outdoing even Mrs. Carter in charity towards his neighbour. When they were both dining with Mrs. Garrick, in company with Hannah More, Mrs. Boscawen, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Dr. Burney, the conversation turned on Thomas Hollis, whose democratic books, decorated with daggers and caps of liberty, were being circulated throughout Europe. 'I doubt he is an atheist,' said Mrs. Carter, in one of those unguarded moments which are sure to occur when the most charitable allow themselves to discuss their neighbours. 'I don't know that,' replied Johnson, smiling triumphantly; 'he might have become one if he had had time to ripen, he might have *exuberated* into an atheist.'

Dr. Johnson always took a friendly interest in her literary work, and suggested that she should undertake a translation of 'Boethius de Consolatione' because there is prose and verse, and put her name to it when published.

Of his epigram on Mrs. Carter,[1] Dr. Johnson

[1] See *Gent. Mag.* vol. viii. p. 210.

wrote: 'I have composed a Greek epigram on Eliza, and think she ought to be celebrated in as many different languages as Louis le Grand.' He always treated her with civility, attention, and respect. Her winning gentleness and the politeness of her conversation and address were said to be such as to disarm even brutality itself, and her religious cast of character and gravity of deportment, as well as her erudition, imposed some check on the asperity and eccentricities of Dr. Johnson, who wrote to her, 'Who is there that you cannot influence?'

It was the affectation of learning that he disliked, not the learning itself; she was not 'hérissée de grec,' nor blown up with self-importance.

> 'And Carter taught the female train,
> The deeply wise are never vain.'

He respected her domestic qualifications, and though he considered that a man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner on his table than when his wife talks Greek, he said, 'My old friend, Mrs. Carter, can make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem.'

He quite allowed that a man of sense and

education should find a suitable companion in his wife, and that it is a miserable thing when conversation is limited to a dispute as to whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted.

When consulted by a friend as to the advisability of proposing to a woman whom he greatly admired, but whose talents he feared, the Doctor assured him that after she had been married to him for one year he would find her reason much weaker, and her wit not so bright. This man, 'who praised one whom he would have been afraid to marry,' probably ended by 'marrying one whom he would have been ashamed to praise.'

Of Dr. Johnson's opinion of the 'Bas Bleu' ladies she wrote to Mrs. Montagu:

'Oh, dear! Oh, dear! how pretty we look, and what brave things Mr. Johnson said of us! I am just as sensible to present fame as you can be. Your Virgils and Horaces may talk what they will of posterity, but I think it is much better to be celebrated by the men, women and children among whom you are actually living. One thing is particularly agreeable to my vanity, that you and I always figure in the literary world together, and that from the classical poet of water-drinking

rhymes to the highest dispenser of human fame, Mr. Johnson's pocket-book, it is perfectly well understood that we are to make our appearance in the same piece. I am mortified, however, that we do not in this last display of our persons and talents stand in the same corner as I am told we do not, for, to say truth, I cannot exactly tell which is you, and which is I, and which is anybody else. But this must arise from mere deficiency of my sight, for some of the good people of Deal affirm my picture to be excessively like.'

At a time that much dissatisfaction was expressed at the mal-administration of the Government, some of the Streatham coterie professed themselves weary of *male* administration and proposed a *fe*male one. Dr. Johnson, when called upon to arrange it, replied, 'Well, then, we will have :

Carter : for Archbishop of Canterbury.
Montagu : First Lord of the Treasury.
Hon. Sophia Byron : Head of the Admiralty.
Mrs. Crewe : Speaker of the House of Commons.
Mrs. Wedderburne : Lord Chancellor.

Mrs. Wallace: Attorney-General.
Mrs. Chapone: Preceptor to the Princes.
Hannah More: Poet Laureate.

and the Heralds' Office under the care of Miss Owen.

'And no place for me?' cried Mrs. Thrale.

'No, no,' replied Dr. Johnson; 'you will get into Parliament by your little silver tongue, and then rise by your own merit.'

'And what shall I do?' exclaimed Fanny Burney.

'Oh, we will send you for a spy—and perhaps you will be hanged!' rejoined the Doctor with a loud laugh, that a French writer has compared to that of a rhinoceros.

Mrs. Anna Williams, the blind lady who found an asylum in Dr. Johnson's house, endeavoured to supplement her scanty means by publishing a volume of 'Miscellanies,' to which the Doctor had contributed the preface and several of the pieces. When she urged its immediate publication, he always put her off with 'Well, we'll think about it,' and Goldsmith said, 'Leave it to me.' But Mrs. Carter was more practical, for by her activity and kindness she procured a long list of subscribers.

Mrs. Carter wrote a paper (No. 100 in 'The Rambler') on modish pleasures, signed Chariessa, 'recommending they should give their readers a complete history of Forms, Fashions, Frolics, Drums, Hurricanes, Balls, Assemblies, Ridottos, Masquerades, Auctions, Plays, Operas, Puppet-shows, and Bear-gardens, and the whole art and mystery of passing day after day, week after week, and year after year, without the assistance of any one thing that formal animals are pleased to call useful or necessary. . . .

'Such irresistible arguments,' she wrote, 'must convince numbers of the error of supposing they were sent into the world for any other purpose but to flatter, sport, and shine, and that an everlasting round of diversion, the more sprightly and hurrying the better, is the most important end of human life.

'As for the antiquated notions of duty, they are not to be met with in any French novel but derived almost wholly from authors called I think, Peter and Paul, who lived a vast many years ago. . . . It does not appear that even their most zealous admirers (for some partisans of his own sort every writer will have) can pretend to say they were ever at one

masquerade. . . . Little oaths, polite dissimulation, tea-table scandal, delightful indolence, the glitter of finery, the triumph of precedence, the enchantments of flattery, are things of which they seem to have had no notion ; . . . indeed, one cannot discover any one thing they pretend to teach people, but to be wise and good.

. . . . . .

'In short, Mr. Rambler, by a faithful representation of modish life, you will have done your part in promoting what everybody seems to confess the true purpose of human existence —perpetual dissipation. . . .

'All feelings of humanity, the sympathies of friendship, all care of a family, and solicitude about the good or ill of others, will be happily stifled in a round of everlasting racketing, and all serious thoughts, particularly of hereafter, will be banished out of the world, as it is so very clear a case that nobody ever dies.'

The paper of which the above is a short résumé was written at the suggestion of Miss Talbot, who suffered from the effects of 'mere wicked racketing,' that consisted not only in going to public places and consuming life in idle visits and dress, but merely in being out on the most plausible pretences perpetually, all

day and every day, discharging the ordinary civilities of life without time to read, reflect, recollect or think. Though she did not frequent card-tables, bear-gardens, and auctions, or lead the life of the 'Ranelagh-education Misses,' her head was as giddy and empty as if she had whirled through the whole round of impertinence. Her acquaintance lay amongst excellent people whom she loved and esteemed, but she complained that there were so many of them that her narrow mind had not room to hold them all at once, with all the attentions that belong particularly to every one.

Mrs. Carter wrote another paper in 'The Rambler' (No. 44) on 'Religion and Superstition.' Religion, she asserted, is not confined to cells or sullen retirement. 'These are the gloomy doctrines of superstition. The greatest honour we can pay the Author of our being is shown by a cheerful behaviour and a mind satisfied with his dispensations. The restraints and difficulties of social active life furnish the most useful discipline of the human heart, and the best means of improvement to ourselves and others. Suffering is no duty unless in a good cause, nor pleasure a crime unless it demoralises.'

'I am more and more charmed with "The Rambler,"' wrote Mrs. Carter. 'Some have thought it too serious; but is it not strange that human creatures, designed for noble and serious thought, should be perpetually calling out for something to make them laugh?'

In 1751 she wrote to Miss Talbot:

'I was outrageous at your not uttering a sigh of lamentation over the departure of "The Rambler," nor once mentioning his farewell paper. It put me a good deal out of humour with the world, and more particularly with the great and powerful part of it. To be sure, people in a closet are apt to form strange, odd ideas, which as soon as they put their heads out of doors, they find to be utterly inconsistent with that something or other that regulates or, rather, confounds the actions of mankind. In mere speculation it seems mighty absurd that those who govern states and call themselves politicians should not eagerly decree laurels, and statues, and public support to a genius who contributes all in his power to make them the rulers of reasonable creatures.

'However, as honours and emoluments are by no means the infallible consequences of such an endeavour, Mr. Johnson is very happy

in having proposed to himself that reward to his labours which he is sure not to be disappointed of by the stupidity or ingratitude of mankind.'

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of the *literati*, and the high esteem in which 'The Rambler' was held, the sale was very inconsiderable—seldom more than 500 copies were disposed of. It was thought that the price of *2d.*, or the unfavourable season of its first publication, might have hindered its sale. The first paper of 'The Rambler' was published on Tuesday, March 20, 1749–50; and it was continued without interruption every Tuesday and Saturday, till Saturday, March 14, 1752, on which day it closed. Dr. Johnson received no assistance except four letters in No. 10, by Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Catharine Talbot; No. 97, by Samuel Richardson; and Nos. 44 and 100, by Elizabeth Carter.

Mrs. Carter did not regret that the patronage of men of letters by the great seemed completely abolished, for 'authors are now,' she said, 'happily obliged to trust solely to that best of all patrons—that best of all judges of literary merit, the public.'

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. MONTAGU

In 1781 a paragraph in the newspapers, which Fanny Burney thought insufferably impertinent, announced that the sprightly writer of 'Evelina' was domesticated with Mrs. Thrale, in the same manner that Miss More was with Mrs. Garrick, and Mrs. Carter with Mrs. Montagu.

This statement was one of those half truths that is worse than a lie.

Mrs. Carter lived in constant intercourse with the 'Queen of the Blues,' assisting at her breakfast parties held in Adams's famous Chinese room in Hill Street, and later at the 'Bas Bleu' assemblies in Portman Square, and was also admitted to those quiet evenings that Mrs. Montagu spent in unreserved interchange of thought with Lord Bath and Lord Lyttelton; but she always kept her own rooms in Clarges

Street, that she might have somewhere to lay her aching head without troubling anybody.

As Elizabeth Robinson, Mrs. Montagu had lived much at Horton, near Hythe, a property that had descended to her mother, Elizabeth Drake, from the Morris family. She had consequently been acquainted with Mrs. Carter from childhood. Her uncle, the Archbishop of Armagh, was created Lord Rokeby, which title descended to her nephew, Matthew Robinson, to whom she bequeathed her husband's vast possessions. He consequently assumed the name of Montagu.

Mrs. Montagu was endowed, according to Lady Louisa Stuart, with vanity 'of the most contented and comfortable kind,' and to attend her assemblies was to drink at the fountain-head. Though she was possessed of great vivacity, a sufficiency of learning, a large fortune, and a fine house, her excellent cook alone could have carried on the war single-handed, and maintained his employer's supremacy over all other competitors as undisputed 'Queen of the Blues.' Mrs. Montagu courted distinguished authors, critics, artists, orators, ecclesiastics, lawyers, and travellers, whilst she patronised their minor brethren, if they

were willing to pay their court to her. All ambassadors or foreigners of note she entertained, and occasionally provided some royal or distinguished personage upon whom the more rustic geniuses might gaze. But she could never accomplish Mrs. Vesey's feat of *squaring the circle*: even the very chairs and tables seem to conspire against her, and form themselves into a ring. She possessed no power of harmonising the conflicting elements of which her assemblies were composed. Her guests arrived in a mass, and each individual departed 'feeling himself single, isolated, and embarrassed with his own person.' On one occasion about twenty-five women formed a barrier round the fireplace in the shape of 'a vast half-moon,' through which the Chancellor, a body of prelates, and other eminent men found it impossible to penetrate. After looking wistfully towards the fire, they had to content themselves with drawing chairs from the wall, and seating themselves solemnly and silently in an outer crescent of their own, until such time as the exit of one of the inferior sex created a 'gap for the wise men to enter in and take possession of the fireplace'—the instinctive stronghold of the Englishman.

For, however much they may endeavour to imitate their foreign neighbours, the English are after all a home-loving race, and our fellow-countrymen in society always appear more or less on the defensive ; therefore, to take their stand with their back to the fire gives them that feeling of assurance that standing with their back to the wall would inspire in another kind of conflict.

Mrs. Montagu's constant pretension caused the 'Bas Bleu' set to be accused of pedantry and affectation, from which most of its individual members were entirely free. Mrs. Carter's sound scholarship sat as easily and quietly upon her as upon a man of learning, and her knowledge of Greek was as natural to her as the knowledge of spelling to an ordinary woman. The name of Carter alone, Lady Louisa assures us, is of sufficient importance to prove that Mrs. Montagu was not without sincere and valuable friends. But she was surrounded not only by flatterers of the more common sort—whose high-flown compliments grew in extravagance as those who interchanged them cooled towards each other, and could only be checked by the ridicule of Horace Walpole or Soame Jenyns—but also

by good, honest people whose organs of admiration unduly predominated over those of discrimination. These simple souls in all truth and integrity would pour forth their hearts, and call the attention of the young to all that could improve their minds. Lady Louisa found herself pulled by the sleeve with 'My dear, did you listen to what Mrs. Montagu said? Did you mind what Miss Hannah More observed? or what Mr. Harris [afterwards Lord Malmesbury] replied?' The discourse of the most learned men and women must sometimes be trivial, and Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Harris might at that moment be debating whether from the appearance of the sunset fair or foul weather might be looked for on the morrow. Miss Gregory, whom Mrs. Montagu had almost adopted as a daughter, possessed the sense of humour to enjoy the comedy that was daily enacted, but she would never permit a word to be said that in any way detracted from her hostess.

The chief honour and felicity of Mrs. Montagu's life was derived, she declared, from the superior merits of her friends (for principles, opinions, and habits are acquired from those with whom we live most); she was cautious and

even a little ambitious in the choice of them, not in the vulgar sense of the word, but her honest ambition was to establish friendship with the 'wise and virtuous.' In Mrs. Carter she found, no doubt, as she did in Lord Lyttelton, 'not only the most sincere and amiable friend, but the best instructor and director of her studies, the companion and guide of her literary amusements, without whom she would have lost her use and importance in society; for her house when he appeared in it was a school of knowledge and virtue.'

When Mrs. Montagu built her palace in the north-west corner of Portman Square, which combined 'the nobleness of greatness in a moderate space,' Mrs. Carter wrote to her:

'I never think of your house in Portman Square as other folks think and talk about it: as a magnificent house, and a fine house, and an elegant house—though all this is very true—but as a house containing a great quantity of air, which I trust will, by the blessing of God, be a means of preserving your health. I wish you as much enjoyment of its magnificence as magnificence can bestow; but magnificence is an idea of form and ceremony. Comforts and conveniences are the every-day necessaries of

life, and the materials of constant cheerfulness ; the sunshine without which the palace would be a dungeon, and with it the "vinegar bottle" (as I, who live in a vinegar bottle, experience) a pleasant habitation.' When we look with admiration on the solid buildings of the eighteenth century, we recall with astonishment Mrs. Carter's wish that, for the safety of society, some lawful method could be found for the punishment of those wretched builders, whose carelessness and villainy had exposed Mrs. Montagu to dangers that only a timely discovery had been able to avert.

The trouble which Mrs. Montagu received from the curiosity of people to see her improvements at Sandleford was the natural penalty of 'l'embarras des richesses.' Nobody plagued Mrs. Carter by besieging her doors in carriages or upon pillions to see her cottage.

From her wind-swept little habitation at Deal Mrs. Carter's thoughts sometimes followed her friend, Mrs. Montagu, who had no distemper but what is common to all fine ladies, the forming of more engagements than it is possible to digest ; she figured her sitting in her dressing room, perplexed with messages and answering notes, longing to run away from 'Courts and

Countesses,' her mind hardly able to push and squeeze its way through visits, dinners, assemblies, notes, letters, bricks, mortar and wainscot, and Mr. Stewart (Athenian Stewart). Or else her imagination placed Mrs. Montagu beneath a green tree at Sandleford where her nerves were fluttering at full liberty after the crowded rooms of London, the bustle of society, and the turmoil of this work-a-day world. Having escaped from the embarrassments, forms, and frivolities of polite life to the pure and unsophisticated joys of the country, she found herself perfumed by roses and honeysuckles, and serenaded by nightingales; zephyrs had flown before her into Berkshire introducing summer that a scowling north-east wind had not suffered to be seen in Kent.

A fine lady must be always in extremes; from the 'beau monde' she looked down upon those strange, unlicked creatures, the Misses in the country towns, and, poor souls! how the town lady would despise them when she was herself in the purer air and in all the heroics of pastoral surroundings. Miss Talbot wondered how anybody could live in a place where vile houses of brick and stone hinder the sight of that pure azure sky, about which for the

moment she was in high rapture. She described the progress from the gay town lady to the contented country housewife. First the tragedy princess in an august melancholy, and then the pastoral nymph lolling on a green bank, among roses and honeysuckle, singing sonnets to the zephyrs, idle indeed, but perfectly rural. In like manner did Marie Antoinette enjoy an elaborate simplicity, and imagine her artificially rustic Arcadia to be truly pastoral.

Mrs. Montagu found it very agreeable to see no human creature but her servants, nor to hear an articulate sound except the cuckoo's unvarying note; but Mrs. Carter warned her 'that in solitude we are tempted to think ourselves wise and virtuous; these short and imperfect views of the grandeur and dignity of the soul should incite our wishes for a less imperfect state, and encourage a cheerful compliance with the humiliating duties of our present condition.'

Though Mrs. Montagu extolled the simple pleasures of the country, 'that general feast nature spreads for all her children, to which she came a happy guest,' and boasted that she wanted not Stewart, Adams, nor Brown (Capability Brown) to build her a palace or lay a county into garden for her, she constantly em-

ployed these artists to embellish both Sandleford, her home in Berkshire, and her residence in Portman Square, where she added to her already large house the room of the Cupidons painted with roses and cupids, and the 'feather room' adorned with the plumage of every possible bird, her pillars of verd antique and the 'porte cochère. Of Mrs. Montagu's 'feather room' Cowper wrote in 1788:

'The birds put off their every hue
To dress a room for Montagu.
The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His rainbows, and his starry eyes;
The pheasant, plumes which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold.
The cock his arch'd tail's azure show,
And river-blanched the swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name
That glossy shine or vivid flame
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.'

It was during some of these works, when Mrs. Montagu had been complaining of bad seasons

and agricultural depression, that Mrs. Carter wrote :

'It grieves me to hear of the mischief the rain has done to your property. I am interested in your "Menus plaisirs," and should be sorry that the fly in the turnips or the smut in the wheat should retard the completion of your elegant room.'

In Mrs. Montagu's contribution to her friend Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead,' there is a conversation between Mercury and a modern fine lady, Mrs. Modish, who excuses her unreadiness to cross the Styx, not on the plea of conjugal attachment and maternal duties, but a glance at her chimney-piece showed it crowded with engagements : to the play on Mondays, balls on Tuesdays, the opera on Saturdays, and card assemblies for the rest of the week, and though late hours and fatigue gave her the vapours, she was ambitious to be thought 'du bon ton.'

'"Bon ton!"' exclaims the astonished Mercury, 'what is that, madam?'

Mrs. Modish, who had admired and aimed at it all her life, answered it was one of the privileges of 'bon ton' never to define or be defined. Though it was the child and

parent of jargon, she could only explain what it was not. 'In conversation it is not wit; in manners it is not politeness; in behaviour it is not address; but it is a little like them all.'

This fine satire was a great favourite with the town and showed much good sense; but with all her talents Mrs. Montagu did not possess the charm of simplicity. Though she had a sensible and penetrating countenance, and the air and manner of a woman accustomed to being distinguished, her acquaintance unfortunately could remember her *trying* for this same air and manner. There was always that half-conscious effort to play the rôle of a fine lady, on which Mrs. Carter often rallied her. 'As for fashion,' she exclaimed, 'whatever Mrs. Montagu does *must* be right.' When she was accompanying Mr. Montagu rather unwillingly on a visit to his northern property, Mrs. Carter wrote:

'It grieves me to think that instead of soaring into regions of intellectual delight, your spirits should be suffocated in the damps of a coal-mine. But, after all, the true proof of wisdom is doing the thing which ought to be done. If you had stayed behind, you might

have appeared a much finer lady, and a much finer genius, and might have sat in your Chinese and Athenian rooms and have written more "Dialogues of the Dead," but you certainly are a more reasonable being in accompanying Mr. Montagu, and assisting him in his business, and the entertainment of his north-country neighbours.'

Mrs. Carter applauded Mrs. Montagu's condescension in riding pillion for some hours in every day, which, though it degraded her from a fine lady to appearing like a mere reputable gentlewoman, was necessitated by the wretched state of her eyes, that betrayed her into such blunders. She hoped Mrs. Montagu would never attempt to ride a single horse, but get behind some good, staid, sober, dull man, on a dull horse, with a strong leathern belt round his coat, on which she might take good, sure hold, and ride much more safely than by mounting a Pegasus of her own guiding. She also begged she would not attempt to drive herself, adding: 'I should be mighty sorry, both for your sake and my own, to be a cottage or a church in your way; however, if you do run into anything, pray let it be John of Gaunt's Castle, and converse with the

melancholy spectres of the race of York and Lancaster.'

Mrs. Montagu's charities were on the munificent scale that rigid economy in the administration of her great wealth and a wholesome horror of debt made possible. When she was in doubt as to whether the purchase of a new 'whisky' (a fashionable carriage of the day) might be deemed an extravagance, Mrs. Carter wrote to her :

'In general the best relief to the poor is from supplying their wants by means of their own honest labour ; therefore our expenditure can only be ranked amongst the vices of useless luxury when, by too great expense in employing those who *can* work, there is not enough reserved for the relief of those who cannot.'

Whiskys were then 'the most prevailing fashion of two-wheel vehicles.' They were one-horse chairs of the lightest construction, and in spite of Mrs. Montagu's qualms of conscience cheaper than any other. The ease and expedition with which they moved enabled them to whisk past other carriages. Hence their name. The whisky curricle had a more solid appearance than the whisky, and on that

account was particularly affected by the Quakers, and was commonly known as a Quake-chaise.

Mrs. Montagu declared she would be perfectly happy if dowlas and linsey-woolsey were so cheap that she could clothe half the parish. Of this aspiration Mrs. Carter warmly approved, and answered :

'I think your dowlas shifts and chequered aprons a more enviable contrivance than the finest birthday trimming that ingenious vanity ever devised. The one will tarnish and fade, and the other furnish materials for a "sky-spun robe," which may figure in a more splendid assembly than any Imperial drawing-room below the stars.'

After all, Mrs. Carter reflected, large possessions often prove as great an obstacle to carrying out our inclinations as poverty. For the comfort of little people, be it remembered that excess is as strong an impediment sometimes as defect ; both rich and poor are fettered by external things. She wrote to Mrs. Vesey, to whom she longed to pay a visit :

'I cannot get to you because I have not a post-chaise ; and Mrs. Montagu cannot get to you because she has a coal-mine.'

CHAPTER IX

MRS. VESEY

Every individual that strongly engaged Mrs. Carter's affection had some characteristic and distinguishing mark. The spirit of some enlivened her indolence, while her quiet tempered their vivacity. Mrs. Vesey she honoured for having the simplicity of a little child. Throughout her life she remained as lively and picturesque as at eighteen, because 'those sullen demons, turbulent agitations, sordid principles and interested schemes, had not put to flight the fair forms of imagination, which can never subsist but in gentleness of disposition and simplicity of heart, for the bustles, perturbations, and competitions of the world are much more destructive than the ravages of age.'

To these characteristics Mrs. Vesey owed her perpetual youth.

She could always wave a fairy wand, and conjure up pleasures and amusements all around her in whatever climate or element she happened to be thrown. Her imagination could raise up palaces and coral groves beneath the sea, and convert a pigeon-house into a dressing-room, and a heap of brick and mortar into a walk of roses upon earth. She would be more amused raising fairy visions uninterrupted at Lucan (her husband's place in Ireland) than in mixing with the gay society of 'geniuses and rational parrots' in Dublin. In fact, she shared Rousseau's power of transporting himself whenever he was alone into an ideal world, where he made for himself the society he liked, and found all those blessings which this world denied him. Though there was little of the turbulent in the composition of the Sylph (as Mrs. Vesey was called by her friends), the uproar of a stormy sea was as much adapted to her sublime imagination, as the soft murmurs of a gliding stream to the gentleness of her temper.

Mrs. Vesey shared with Mrs. Montagu the honour of having originated the 'Bas Bleu' assemblies, but according to Fanny Burney she was 'gentle and diffident, and dreamed not of any

competition, only desiring to collect celebrities under her roof, and without attempting to shine herself, or be accounted one of their number, she had the happy secret of bringing forward talents of every kind, and diffusing over the society the gentleness of her character. With no advantage of appearance and manner, she possessed, with a reserve of good sense, that easy politeness that gained everyone in a moment, and had the almost magic art of putting all the company at their ease.'

By the dedication of her poem, the 'Bas Bleu,' Hannah More gave Mrs. Vesey the preference, not only of Mrs. Montagu but of any philosopher who should *square the circle*, a feat both these hostesses were constantly attempting in the arrangement of their chairs. Sometimes in Mrs. Vesey's anxiety to render all her guests easy with one another, her fear of ceremony, and eagerness to break a circle, she insisted upon everybody sitting back to back, the chairs being drawn into little parties of three together in a confused manner, all over the room, so that the occupants could not catch sight of their neighbours except by twisting their necks. But such was Mrs. Vesey's magic power that she could arrange

forty people in her room, and yet contrive to give it a less crowded appearance than it would have with a dozen people filled by anyone else. 'One would think,' said Mrs. Carter, 'that you stript the souls of your company of their bodies, and left only a phantom to cover their nakedness; yet I never perceived that a human soul is more clearly seen through at your assemblies than at any other.'

Though Mrs. Vesey was famous for her dexterity and skill in selecting her guests, owing to her kindness of heart, her circle threatened to become too wide for comfort; so Hannah More, Mrs. Carter, and Horace Walpole made their own parties for her assemblies, and asked and excluded just whom they liked.

'Our last "Vesey" was a little too large,' wrote Hannah More, 'and had too many great ladies. We are agreed to keep the next a secret, but poor dear Mrs. Vesey is so sweet-tempered that, though she vows she will not mention it to anybody, she cannot help asking every agreeable creature that comes in her way.'

Even Mrs. Vesey's deafness did not detract from her love of society. With numberless ear-trumpets hanging at her waist, slung about her neck, or tossed upon the chimney-piece,

she moved about among her guests, and in her eagerness to participate in all their bons mots she would hasten from one group to another, carrying her stool, cushion, and trumpets with her, and often thought fit to change her place fifteen times in a quarter of an hour. But, alas! encumbered with so many impedimenta she invariably arrived at the moment the speaker had become the listener, and in her haste, frequently clapping the brazen ear of the trumpet to her forehead, pathetically exclaimed, 'As soon as I come near nobody speaks.' In vain her guests tried to explain, but the Sylph, detecting amusement elsewhere, had already darted off, trumpet in hand, in hopes of better fare, and would gently murmur her disappointment on finding herself again too late.

It was Mrs. Vesey's misfortune to raise her expectations too high for the condition of mortality, which gave her that perpetual restlessness of body and mind that harassed and wore out both. She scarcely ever enjoyed one object from apprehension that something better might possibly be found in another.

The singularity of her personality, and the art by which she preserved the jarring characters that composed her motley assemblies from

quarrelling with each other, was to her friends a matter requiring deep investigation. Her secret, they decided, was that she contrived to put all her guests in perfect good humour with themselves, and without any appearance of flattery, effort, or design, making each individual with whom her enchanting blue room was crowded consider itself as the principal and distinguished object. Wherever people imagine themselves to possess the first place, they will always be in wonderful good humour with all the world, and external war is at an end. This art would have been impossible to attain if Mrs. Vesey had possessed a grain of vanity, but as she had no merely personal feelings, she had an infinite deal of attention to bestow in adapting herself to the feelings of others: hence her success.

The goodness of Mrs. Vesey's heart, and the 'uncommon turn of her head,' showed 'a genius of that eccentric kind which is mighty apt to be accompanied by a plentiful lack of common sense.' When a friend who was staying with her in the country was ordered not to use her crutches on the floor for fear of slipping, but to be carried downstairs and use them on the gravel walk, Mrs. Vesey started

up, and said she would order the gardener immediately to gravel the drawing-room. The dear Sylph would also à la Vesey frequently offer Mrs. Carter a lodging, totally forgetting that she had long before engaged her only spare room.

Simplicity and absent-mindedness were her chief characteristics, she could hardly remember her own name. 'What has become of our Sylph?' Mrs. Carter wrote; 'I do not know, I expect she hardly knows herself, but I hope she is as well as nervous people must ever expect to be.' During a severe winter she consoled herself with the reflection that the Sylph would be in no danger of petrifaction, for ether does not petrify. All Mrs. Vesey's domestic arrangements were superintended by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Handcock, a very practical woman. From the contrast of their endowments they were known as 'Body' and 'Mind.' When Mrs. Vesey invented a coffee-pot with all the essential advantages of a beautiful form, Mrs. Handcock most unreasonably objected because the lid would not open to put in the coffee, nor the spout answer to pour it out.

Mrs. Carter wrote sympathetically:

'And so Mrs. Handcock had no taste for your new invention. But she is an intolerable common-sense woman. As to her strange objections that the pot has neither spout nor handle, and that the lid will not open, they are quite nugatory; for, as it is of a beautiful Etruscan form, it answers every essential purpose of a good coffee-pot—except the possibility of making coffee in it, which is only a mere circumstance, which anyone of true genius would easily overlook.'

Mrs. Vesey's imagination could be agreeably amused in furnishing her new dressing-room so as no mortal dressing-room was ever yet furnished, and making it enchanting with the decorations devised by her genius. Though her friends were attached by association to the 'dear blue room' in Bolton Row, they felt sure of finding a pleasant apartment, of whatever shape, size or colour, wherever she resided.

But unfortunately for her immediate belongings, her lively imagination had also the power of twisting her sister-in-law's bad cold into a paralytic seizure, and her own ailments into a dozen apoplectic fits, so that 'she never had recourse to hope, if she could catch at the

smallest reason for despair,' and in default of a dragon had always an objection ready to anything that tended to the accomplishment of her own wishes. Mrs Carter, on the contrary, hated to dwell on anything that would give her pain, and never believed what she did not like till she could not possibly help it. Mrs. Vesey's little misfortunes and vexations, imaginary and real, made her friends smile, but even her servants, who were exemplary, were moved by her charm, and found it impossible to resist not only her will but her wishes. There must, however, have been something wanting in the composition of the Sylph, for, alas! Mr. Vesey understood her not.

His lack of appreciation roused the indignation of her devoted circle of admirers, but is comprehensible to those not under her spell. When Mr. Vesey was made a Privy Councillor in Ireland, her friends admitted their poor Sylph would have preferred his being appointed a constable or churchwarden in England, and that his home in Ireland appeared very little 'adapted to her genius.' It was a mere prosaical house, full of mortal comforts and conveniences, without a particle of romance; in short, Mrs. Carter declared it was 'much better

adapted to the wants and purposes of the Right Honourable Agmondisham Vesey than to those of his more ethereal partner.' The dear old castle, with the niches in its walls, she valued beyond everything, and the display of Mr. Vesey's correct Grecian taste was very grievous to her poetic imagination. However, she contrived to pass the winter at Lucan very tolerably —at least judging from the manner in which she talked of it afterwards, though it was true, Mrs. Carter added, that the winter of which she made the 'éloge' was past.

'God mend her health and give her better spirits,' wrote Mrs. Carter of the poor Sylph, who, like all excitable people, was subject to fits of depression. 'By all means, my dear Mrs. Vesey,' she wrote, 'leave Dr. James to swallow his own powders, and Mr. Vesey to squabble with his two old gentlemen, and get as fast as you can to Tunbridge; if you do not find health in the springs, you will at least acquire good spirits from the society, but do not seduce Mrs. Montagu into any of your lively schemes for being diverted to death.'

Mrs. Vesey had a much better art of amusing herself in a crowd than Mrs. Carter,

who to the end remained just as many degrees removed from a rake as ever.

Mrs. Carter was exceedingly disappointed at the Sylph's rejection of a scheme for visiting Walmer Castle, within a mile of her house at Deal. 'But I expect,' she wrote, 'it is Mrs. Handcock's fault; she probably represented it to you merely as a pleasant dwelling, where you might eat your dinner and drink your tea like any modern house. If she had told you that some discontented spectre walked its melancholy rounds every night along the grass-grown platform, the attraction would have been irresistible to your curiosity. She might have told you how the spirits of the air talk in whistling winds through its battlements, and the angel of the waters dashes the roaring billows at its foot. Instead of alluring you by these sublime ideas, I suspect she dwelt chiefly on the pleasure you would confer upon a couple of mere two-legged human creatures; upon which you turned about and said, "Why, Mrs. Handcock, we can meet enough of these upon the Pantiles!" and so the die turned for Tunbridge.' Sometimes Mrs. Carter's friends would take a cottage at Walmer, 'for the convenience of going into the sea' [bathing?].

'Tis a mighty pretty scheme,' she declared, 'for Walmer is one of the pleasantest villages about here.'

When Mr. Vesey died he left 'the Sylph,' to the great indignation of her friends, wholly dependent on the bounty of his nephew, who fortunately proved himself worthy of the trust. Though Mr. Vesey's case is not stated, he secures our uninvited sympathy, as his ethereal partner had always obtruded her superiority to all earthly considerations of 'mere mortal comforts and conveniences.' When he was proposed in 1773 as a member of the Literary Club, Burke began by saying he was a man of gentle manners. 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners, you have said enough.'

Mrs. Vesey's friends were provoked at 'their dear Niobe' continuing to weep so immoderately for what they considered little deserved her tears—the loss of Mr. Vesey.

'Had the subject been ever so worthy,' wrote Mrs. Carter, 'it would have been her duty to check them, but, alas! she has no resolution.'

Though Mrs. Carter had no personal experience, she might have imagined the pos-

sibility of there being something in the tie, that after years of estrangement would in the end reassert itself, and that sorrow would be only intensified by the fatal 'too late.'

Poor Mrs. Vesey's timorous and feeble mind fluctuated between the extremes of unbelief and superstition; though tormented with doubts as to a future existence, she would start at the sudden opening of a door, expecting a visit from her departed friends. Mrs. Carter wrote to her on this matter:

'I am flattered to find I agree with Mr. Burke. Yes, ask your own heart; and it will tell you what is the rule of life that best directs it to grow wise and good. Be thankful for this gracious guidance, and never listen to the half-*learning*, the perverted understanding, and pert ridicule of French philosophers and beaux esprits, who would persuade you it is best to wander over a wide stormy ocean without a pilot, and without a leading star!'

CHAPTER X

LORD BATH

William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, born in 1682, the political antagonist of Sir Robert Walpole, was the intimate friend of Mrs. Montagu. At her house Mrs. Carter was accustomed, when in town, to my Lord Bath's society almost every day. His wit, strong sense, knowledge of the world, and charm of manner made him the admiration of society, but he often declared he spent no time so happily as in the company of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter. His letters to Mrs. Carter were found after her decease, but she had written a memorandum that they were to be destroyed, and they were burnt by her executor.

She spent the summer of 1761 in the company of Mrs. Montagu, Lord Bath and Lord Lyttelton, at Tunbridge Wells, where the prospect had 'nothing of the sublime and

WILLIAM PULTENEY, EARL OF BATH

From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery

magnificent rudeness of Bristol, but the wildness was all soft and agreeable'—surroundings amidst which the geniuses of the age 'sported sentiment from morn till noon, from noon to dewy eye,' and wit flowed more copiously than the springs. It was owing to their persuasions that Mrs. Carter was prevailed on to publish the collection of her poems which appeared in 1762. The proposal of printing these trifles was made by my Lord Bath, who desired they might be dedicated to himself; and that she might be under no kind of difficulty added that he himself would write the dedication, which he did in a style exactly suited to her taste, for she had such an objection to flattery that she would not even allow herself to say what she really thought. His politeness, his constant cheerfulness, and generous, friendly disposition made her indeed heartily esteem and love him, but she declared she would be as far from putting her sentiments into a dedication, as he would be from allowing her to do so. Of her verses addressed to Lord Bath, Archbishop Secker said: 'Why, Madam Carter, you have not been tolerably civil to the man.'

Lord Lyttelton's verses were prefixed to the collection of Mrs. Carter's poems.

It was supposed at one time that Mrs. Carter would marry my Lord Bath, on which report Archbishop Secker often rallied her. In answer to the Archbishop's most malicious message of condolence, on the attentions that Lord Bath was reported to be paying to Lady Abercorn at Tunbridge, she answered in the same spirit, and asked indignantly, 'Did my Lord B. ever take the very nosegay from his button-hole, and deliver it into the hand of Lady A.? Did my Lord Bath ever go to a toy shop and purchase a knotting-shuttle, painted all over with cupids, and cages, and fishes on a hook, and present it to Lady A.? And may not people who have such distinctions to boast of bid defiance to all the witcheries of Lady A.? When one fine gentleman said to another fine gentleman upon the Pantiles, "She talks Greek faster than any woman in England," pray was this meant of my Lady A.? Or when the market folks left their pigs and their fowls to squall their hearts out, while they told each other, "Sartainly she is the greatest Scollard in the world!" was the person they stared at my Lady A.?'

'It is true,' she admitted, 'that my Lord Bath does sometimes draw his chair, in a sort

of a kind of an edgeway fashion, near my Lady A. But pray consider the difference. It is by mere dint of scratching and clawing that Lady A. can draw Lord Bath—poor man! —a few plain steps across the Pantiles; while we, by the natural power of sober attraction, draw him quite up "Tug Hill" to the top of Mount Ephraim, and keep him there, till we are quite afraid he will endanger his life in returning.'

The disembarkation of Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg Strelitz at Harwich owing to bad weather, and her consequent visit to Lord Abercorn at Witham on her way to London, before her marriage to George III., furnished the Archbishop with fresh matter of condolence, conveyed through Miss Talbot, who wrote: 'Alas, poor Miss Carter, what joy can anything give you if it be true that your persecutor, Lady Abercorn, lives with her son at Witham; for consider that after being the sole object of all eyes, and engrosser of all admiration at Tunbridge, she only went from thence to prove to the world that not only could Lord Bath make his parties with none but her ladyship—but even the Princess, whom so many thousands had been expecting for a fortnight

at Greenwich, could find no one fit to honour with her first visit to England but Lady Abercorn. You may talk of your Apollos and Minervas as long as you please, but, after this, never let me contend again with the friends of honest Eolus and Boreas.'

Princess Charlotte had embarked at Cuxhaven on August 28, 1761, in the Royal yacht 'Charlotte' that had been launched the previous summer at Deptford, and named in honour of the future Queen. The crew were clothed at his Majesty's expense in a red uniform, with gold lace hats, light grey stockings, buckles and pumps. This gala costume must have hampered the handy British seaman. No news of the vessel was received until September 6, for after twice sighting the coast of England, she had been repeatedly driven off by contrary winds.

To persons of delicate constitutions sea voyages are sometimes 'very pernicious,' but her Highness, though one day in hopes of landing on English ground, and the next in danger of being driven on the coast of Norway, continued in good health, and diverted herself with playing English tunes on the harpsichord. On her journey to St. James's she was refreshed

at Colchester with tea and coffee handed to her simultaneously by two of the principal inhabitants, and she proceeded to Witham, where Lord Abercorn provided as elegant an entertainment as time would permit. The King's coach and servants met her at Rumford.

Mrs. Carter found during her stay with Mrs. Montagu, Lord Bath and Lord Lyttelton at Tunbridge, that 'two public breakfasts, two days' excursion into Sussex, one fit and a half of the headache, the making up of four dozen franks, and then falling violently in love with the man who signed them [evidently Lord Bath], added to the ordinary routine of life at the Wells, left her very little leisure for any other occupation.'

Her real opinion of the man, apart from all joking or fear of flattery, was shown in a letter written after his death, in which melancholy event she felt her own share very sensibly, for she said 'most truly did I love him.'

None of his friends, she declared, would remember him longer, or with equal affection. With all his talents, that rendered him the object of popular admiration, he had not the least tincture of vanity and importance. Though he excelled in conversation, he never took the

lead, or assumed that superiority to which he had a claim. He did not dictate, dogmatise or talk essays like Lord Bolingbroke, or monopolise the conversation like Lord Granville, but called forth the powers of others. He did not lead up to pre-arranged bons mots like Lord Chesterfield, all was natural and easy, and his wit directed to whatever chanced to be the subject of the moment. Whether in a small or large circle, he was more agreeable, entertaining and instructive than any other man of his time. He outshone all the other members of the Opposition, known as the 'Cobhamites' or 'Grenville cousins' assembled at Stowe. His temper always appeared equal, there was a perpetual flow of vivacity and good humour in his conversation, and most attentive politeness in his behaviour, which was not the effect merely of external and partial good-breeding.

Lord Bath was accused by his enemies of an undue love of money, that instinct of accumulation often the besetting sin of really great men. But many stories told to his disadvantage reflect on his accusers. Lord Chesterfield desired to purchase from him the land that lay between Chesterfield House and Hyde Park, in order that his view might not be obstructed. To oblige

him, Lord Bath agreed to sell it for 3,000*l.*, although with the general rage for building the land was worth more. Lord Chesterfield made 'a heavy outcry' against Lord Bath's avarice and extortion, but at length agreed to pay the money, and then, regardless of his view, immediately resold the land to a builder for 5,000*l.*

In 1746 Lord Bath had the satisfaction of being Prime Minister for very little over forty-eight hours, but he reaped none of the fruits of office, being constantly in the Opposition, that he not only supported by his abilities, but carried on chiefly at his own expense.

Bishop Newton tells us that his love of money was not near so great as was reported, for in that age of prodigality everyone was deemed covetous that paid his way honestly, and did not squander his money. He was strict and exact in all his accounts, and any attempt to impose upon him he considered as an insult to his understanding. Like Hotspur he would 'give to any well-deserving friend,' but he loved a bargain, and in that matter would not readily yield a point.

He contributed largely to the education of many promising young men, encouraged learning, and subscribed liberally to literary under-

takings. He dispensed considerable sums in private pensions, and it was affirmed that he gave a tenth part of his income to deserving charities. He never stooped to unfair methods. An ingenious rascal begged to be employed by the Opposition in opening and copying letters, however carefully folded and sealed, and restoring them, so that the writer himself could not detect that they had been touched. Lord Bath sent the man into an adjoining room with a letter sealed with a finely cut coat of arms; after a quarter of an hour he returned with a copy of the letter, and the cover intact. Lord Bath merely regretted his inability to punish so dangerous a character, and bade him seek his reward elsewhere, which he did with success, for he soon after found employment in the Secretary of State's office.

Lord Bath's saving propensities were instilled into him by his wife, a lady who had such good intelligence in the 'Alley' with Gideon (the Portuguese Jew, afterwards created Lord Eardley) and other stockbrokers that her brother, Colonel Gumley, called her dressing-room, where her advisers congregated, the Jews' synagogue. Lord Bath possessed such implicit faith in his wife's financial sagacity, that on her

marriage he gave her 10,000*l.* to employ and improve as she pleased. Having increased this sum to 60,000*l.*, she refused to make a will, saying to her lord, that she owed him all she had, and to him it should all return.

Though Lord Harvey denied that she possessed any one good quality but beauty, Lady Bath, like many another, was a wonderfully agreeable woman when she was in a good humour, but, possibly owing to financial anxieties, her spirits were oftener clouded and overcast. She did not live to see the failure of all the ambitious schemes of family aggrandisement for which she and Lord Bath had toiled in vain. Soon after her death their only son, Lord Pulteney, died of fever at Madrid. The agonies of grief endured by Lord Bath are described by Bishop Newton, who sought to comfort his friend with the reflection that 'Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.' Though the truth of this assertion cannot be gainsaid, it was rather an ill-timed reminder that no heir survived to inherit Lord Bath's vast accumulations.

His chaplain, Dr. Douglas, declared Lord Bath was of all men the best and easiest to live

with. So familiar and engaging was his manner that you could not be with him half an hour without being entirely at ease ; your awe of him vanished, while your respect increased. As an orator, Speaker Onslow described him as 'having the most popular parts for public speaking of any great man he ever knew,' and Walpole feared his tongue more than another man's sword.

But in spite of the favourable testimony of his friends, it has been truly said that his career was marred by a spirit of faction, that caused him to stake his whole reputation on overthrowing Walpole, and later, on attempting to get rid of Pitt. He was not moved by any personal enmity to Sir Robert Walpole, or ambitious views of supplanting him. He liked the man, but disliked his measures. 'In the protracted course of this contest he narrowed public life to the petty conditions of a duel, and at last, for reasons which no on-looker could understand, fired into the air. Thus he called down upon him his proper Nemesis ; he

'Left not faction, but of it was left.'

In 1739 Lord Bath suffered from a dangerous illness, that cost him 750 guineas in

physician's fees, and from which he was eventually cured by a draught of small beer. Mindful of the efficacy of simple remedies, in 1763, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, he had recourse to the Spa waters. During their tour he appeared to be the youngest, liveliest, and healthiest of the whole party. He preserved that freshness of mind which in his younger days was combined with great bodily activity. It did Mrs. Carter's heart good to see with what universal respect he was treated by all people, of all ranks, and all nations at Spa. There was so much dignity, politeness, and good humour in his behaviour to all, that he well deserved the attention that was paid him. The following year he died.

Extract from Mrs. Carter's verses to Lord Bath, written when

'Subdued at length beneath laborious life,
In peaceful age the harass'd virtues sink to rest.
. . . . . .
Yet not in flow'ry Indolence reclin'd,
They waste th' important gift of sober hours:
To every state has Heav'n its task assign'd,
To ev'ry task assign'd its needful powers.
. . . . . .
For better purposes to favour'd man
Is length of days—tremendous blessing!—given;

To regulate our life's disorder'd plan,
And purify the blemish'd soul for Heav'n.

. . . . . .

Such, gracious Heav'n, be Pulteney's setting day,
And cheerful peace its various labours close;
May no dark cloud obscure its soften'd ray,
Nor ruffling tempest shake its calm repose.'

. . . . . .

CHAPTER XI

SPA AND FOREIGN TOUR

Soon after the treaty of peace was signed in the beginning of the year 1763, Mr. and Mrs. Montagu and Lord Bath persuaded Mrs. Carter to make a tour on the Continent with them, in the course of which they were to visit Spa for the benefit of Lord Bath's health. They were also accompanied by Dr. Douglas, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, the learned detector of literary forgeries, who was Chaplain to Lord Bath, and his intimate friend. Mrs. Montagu said that when she had Mrs. Carter she had nothing to wish for ; and Mrs. Carter declared she would even enjoy Mrs. Montagu's company in a ramble by moonlight, amongst the ruins of an old abbey. This wish expressed more than a thousand speeches, for she said, there are many very good sort of folks whom one may tolerate, and even be mighty pleased

with, in broad sunshine who would be quite insufferable by moonlight.

She had visited Oxford and Blenheim with a set of very well-meaning folk, some of whom were dull, some were peevish, and some were in love ; and most of them, even in their natural state, would have considered a consular statue of Cicero and a waxen image of Queen Anne in pretty much the same light, so, for want of a companion of critical taste and glowing imagination to give distinction, the whole expedition made her heartily weary. She could enjoy the pleasures of imagination in solitude, or in still greater perfection with a companion of taste and spirit, but to be bound to worthy people, who saw no difference between the ruins of a Gothic castle and a square brick house, the solemn music of a waterfall and the sharpening of a saw, and that never allowed her to dwell on any object that struck her, she could not endure. These uncongenial companions were nevertheless a set of literary people from St. John's Gate. Before they had gone ten miles they were seized with pangs of hunger, that wreaked its rage on a plum-cake at the nearest village. While she decorated Waller's grave at Beaconsfield with laurels, and made a poetic

excursion to the top of a hill, treading on hyacinths and violets, and conversing with the genius of the wood, the *literati* plodded prosaically along the road, and described her powers of climbing as merely acrobatic.

Mrs. Carter with the Montagus and Lord Bath landed at Calais on June 5, and returned to Dover on September 19 of the same year. They went first to Spa, then after a short tour in Germany proceeded down the Rhine into Holland; and thence through Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Dunkirk to Calais again.

Their equipages consisted of a coach, a vis-à-vis, a post-chaise, and a chaise-marine, with ten or twelve outriders. A vis-à-vis, so called from the fact that only two persons could sit facing each other, was a narrow, contracted coach, where it was possible to 'sit warmer' than in other carriages, and was so confined as to prevent passengers being tossed about. Though somewhat higher in the body than an ordinary coach, it did not usually exceed it in weight. The vis-à-vis was seldom used by any other than persons of high character or fashion.

According to a French-German dictionary a 'chaise-marine' was a sedan-chair, and a 'chasse-marée' a fish-cart. The 'chaise-

marine' possibly combined the advantages of both.

Mrs. Carter travelled with 'as little incumbrance as is possible for any animal not clothed with wool or feathers,' and made the best of any difficulties on the road; once at the end of a journey she declared that she felt 'pretty faint, having taken nothing but serpents' food [dust] on the way.' She found the 'politesse et empressement pour vous servir' of the lower orders in France very engaging, though throughout her foreign travels she was struck with the infinite inferiority of all advantages when put in competition with the Bible and Magna Charta.

There was a little perruquier with a most magnificent queue, belonging to the inn at Calais, who was her second page; she adds, 'My first is provided for me by my Lord Bath, a little French boy with an English face.'

This 'little rogue of a page' was excessively entertained when, on Mrs. Montagu and Mrs Carter inquiring if it were possible to see the inside of a convent, a nun answered: 'Pas sans y rester au moins.' Such confinement would hardly have suited the social tastes of the 'Bas Bleu' ladies.

The roads appeared very fine, but tore the English vehicles all to pieces. The horses were harnessed with ropes, and the travellers were thankful when they arrived with no worse accident than some fractures in their tackle, which was always getting out of gear.

Lord Bath's coach lost one of its hind wheels half-way between Brussels and Liège; the damage took two hours to repair, so there was no hope of reaching their destination by daylight, which was desirable in the lawless and undisciplined territory of Liège, described by Mrs. Montagu as 'the Seven Dials of Europe.' However, as the evening was fine, except for some apprehensions from the crippled state of the coach, they went on in good spirits.

Just as they had passed the Gate of Liège, which is situated at the bottom of a long steep hill, Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, who were in the vis-â-vis, heard a violent crash, followed by a fearful yelling in the street, which the darkness made still more terrible. They found it to be what they apprehended: the coach was broken. Nobody was hurt, but Mrs. Montagu was so frightened that Mrs. Carter was afraid she would faint. In this perplexity she spied an honest-looking man with a candle at the

side of their vehicle, who, to her great comfort, could speak French, so she begged he would let her come into his house. With 'great good nature' he offered to call an English gentleman who lodged with him. Here she procured some hartshorn for Mrs. Montagu, and by the time she got better, my Lord Bath and Mr. Montagu arrived perfectly unhurt.

From Liège to Spa all the carriages held out very well, except the 'chaise-marine,' which was overturned. The little page, with whom my Lord Bath had provided Mrs. Carter, gave a terrible account of the affair. 'A gun, which was deeply loaded, broke in pieces by the overthrow, but did not go off.'

At Spa the rains were perpetual, and they went on 'drinking and clothing' themselves in water. On the walks of the Geronsterre were seen priests and Hussars, beaux and hermits, nuns and fine ladies, stars and crosses, cowls and ribbons, all blended together in the most lively and picturesque manner imaginable. As to beaux esprits, Mrs. Carter thanked her stars she had neither seen nor heard of such trumpery in the place, and there seemed to be none of those fashionable pests of society, the bucks and choice spirits among them. The society of

Spa was the least factious of any she had ever met at a water-drinking place; for there were neither quarrels, nor parties, nor lampoons; people in general drank their water, and held their tongues. Mrs. Carter's definition of a lampoon in a country town had relieved her friend, Miss Talbot, in a grievous fit of the spleen. In Canterbury,[1] she said, everything that people do not like or understand is comprehended under the name of a lampoon, whether it be prose or verse, song, riddle, panegyric, or funeral elegy.

Our countrymen were at that time held in good repute on the Continent. An old French general said he had fought against them with all his might, in order to gain their good opinion.

Princess Esterhazy wished to be introduced as soon as possible to the English, but desired to take her own time as to the rest of the company; so quiet were they, that Mrs. Carter felt a little foolish at hearing a foreigner observe maliciously that it would not be known there were any of her countrymen at Spa if a footman did not now and then run through the street, screaming in English after a stray dog.

[1] See p. 52.

She was, however, scandalised to see some of her 'compatriotes' whom she had formerly known with pale, decent, unsophisticated faces at Bath and Tunbridge, now appearing at Spa in glaring Parisian complexion. 'It is prodigious,' she exclaimed; 'how I long to beat them.' The Comtesse de Choiseul had just come from Paris with a face like a coach wheel. French manners seemed to be growing as universal as their language, and even German gravity appeared to have 'culbuté' into French philosophy. It was quite terrifying to meet a chapter of German Chanoinesses all with such fierceness of countenance. The most complete beauty, however, was one of their order, who, with nothing to put one in mind of the Venuses and Helens of old, had the expression and countenance of an angel.

Everyone at Spa was preparing to pay their court to Princess Ferdinand of Prussia, but as a hoop was absolutely necessary, Mrs. Carter declined the honour of looking silly in the Royal presence, for no hoop had she, and no hoop did she design to have. After all, the Princess gave a dispensation for going without hoops, but one of Mrs. Carter's severe headaches got her out of the scrape.

Poor Prince Ferdinand of Prussia suffered much from the unkind treatment of his brother, Frederick the Great; this hero, as Mrs. Carter said, 'who defied Omnipotence, this philosopher *sans souci* who was the slave of his own capricious humours and the torment of all who had any dependence on his favour.' At Spa Prince and Princess Ferdinand were very gay and joyous, their manners were unaffected and agreeable, and 'Vive la bagatelle!' seemed to be their motto.

The Princess was a most indefatigable dancer; she wore a cap of such a size as had never yet been seen upon the head of the tallest plebeian gentlewoman. Her Royal Highness and her suite were the most extraordinary sight, their dresses were so ridiculously stiff that they put Mrs. Carter in mind of King Pharaoh's Court in a puppet show. They were laced within an inch of their lives, their stays excessively stiff, and their stomachs of an amazing length, nearly approaching to their chins. But what struck her most was that their features were at a dead stand; never did anything in the human countenance so much realize the fable of the Gorgon. The Princess, strange to say, had a fine complexion, and was

as pretty as it was possible to be with such a stony look. As for her French pronunciation, all that could be said of it was 'Cela écorche les oreilles.'

Mrs. Carter declared that for her own part, she had never since she came to Spa been in love to signify, except with a Russian Ambassador, a pretty little man, who had cast the bear-skin, and did not at all resemble the plump gentleman with the arrow in his throat on her seal. But Mrs. Montagu, who was very fond of the fine folk and fine things of this nether world, carried on an infinite flirtation with the Prince Bishop of Augsburg, 'en attendant le Roi de Prusse'.

The talents of this Royal Prelate did not appear to Mrs. Carter to be of the most shining kind, like his diamonds. But arrayed in a blossom-coloured coat, with embroidered star and diamond cross, there was perfect decorum and much good nature in his behaviour, and in his religion she believed him to be perfectly sincere. He desired her not to have the headache the evenings she was engaged to dine with him, but the headache, alas! was no flatterer of foreign Princes. In the midst of this society of grave bishops, serene princesses,

English lords and ladies, High Dutch barons, Low Dutch burgomasters, and Flemish fat gentlewomen, Mrs. Carter wrote: 'Dining with Princes and Princesses to be sure is one way of life, and playing at penny quadrille is another; each is a mighty good thing in its turn, and I can very cordially accommodate myself to both; but in spite of all the honours and amusements of Spa, I look forward with great delight to seeing my friends at Deal again.'

On their return journey Mr. and Mrs. Montagu, Lord Bath, and Mrs. Carter dined at the Hague with Prince Louis of Brunswick. All the Foreign Ministers were there; the entertainment was 'very noble,' about forty-five dishes in each course. They crossed from Rotterdam in a vile vessel to Moerdyke; the navigation of the river so near its mouth was very unsafe, but it could only have been avoided by crossing a ferry four miles long, where the father of the late Prince of Orange was drowned sitting in his coach. Much was said to reconcile the ladies to a nocturnal expedition, but they were thunderstruck at the information that they were to embark and sail all night; they found the cabins and beds very good for people

who could breathe without air, but, having no inclination to be buried alive, they insisted on having the state room to themselves for the night, and resigned the beds below to the gentlemen, who were so charmed with them. As to my Lord Bath, he was so impatient to get into his delectable hole that he went off early in the afternoon with great glee. As soon as they landed they procured, as fast as they could, a 'miserable, ragged, dirty thing called a coach,' and hurried away to Breda, and there immediately went to bed.

At Brussels they waited on Lady Primrose, and met a lady who desired to be introduced to them. Mrs. Carter added: 'I happened to be in a talking fit, and as I always talk bad French much more boldly than I do good English, there was no end to my larum; so the poor soul is gone home, blessing herself, and crossing herself, and praying to every saint in her calendar to deliver her from ever more attempting to be introduced to a learned lady.'

CHAPTER XII

BODY AND MIND

Mrs. Carter considered long life a 'tremendous blessing'; she was

'Joyful to live, yet not afraid to die.'

It was a very 'fashionable maxim' that people should forget their friends, and drive the remembrance of mortality out of their heads as fast as possible. But the thoughts of death did not depress her, for she never allowed her mind to dwell on the physical aspect; in all her meditations on the subject she passed at once from this life to a better. Life, with all its toils and sufferings, is mercifully diversified with comforts and pleasures that render it greatly preferable to non-existence. Innumerable joys find a place amidst the evils of mortality; we suffer only just enough to reconcile us to the limits of our present life, and to make us look forward to that which is to come. If every prospect were

limited by the grave, what horror should we feel at the thought of quitting a world full of wonder, beauty, and magnificence! How terrible to close our eyes on the flowery earth and radiant sun, to 'leave the warm precincts of the cheerful day,' and sink into a cold, dark, eternal night! To lose all sense of intellectual pleasure and human affection! From this dreadful extinction Mrs. Carter exclaimed, 'God be thanked we are secured!' Much as she was attached to this world, she heartily rejoiced that it was not to last for ever.

Yet she had little curiosity concerning a better. She was content and thankful to know that those who endeavour to fulfil the conditions on which future happiness is promised, and to perform their present duties, will, when the task is over, infallibly be happy, and convinced that He Who formed our capacities for happiness alone knows what will make us so. 'We can none of us,' she concluded, 'feel much concern at the thoughts of being divested of spasms, apoplexies, fluttering nerves, and aching heads.' The humiliation of mortal frailty can never be completely subdued but in that state where alone the 'spirits of the just' will be 'made perfect.'

When advanced in life she wrote: 'It is

my birthday; there are few people who have so many reasons to be fond of life as myself, and yet perhaps there are not many to whom the thoughts of its being so far advanced would give less concern. In a course of travelling, though the road be ever so pleasant, and the company ever so good, one cannot help sometimes feeling that one is not at home, and looking forward to the journey's end. How thankful ought we to be that there is at last a home, where all who do not wilfully take a wrong path will be sure to find repose and security, which in the most prosperous journey can never be found on the road. Yet, except in cases of violent pain, life has always its attractions, and the weary passenger, though in sight of home, and travelling through a rough path, yet sees on either hand some flowery spot, or hears some tuneful note; and thus charmed by colour and enlivened by song, walks contentedly on, without too impatient wishes for the end of the journey.'

She had always been struck with the truth of Seneca's observation, that 'nothing is really great which is not calm and gentle,' and she scarcely recollected any passage in antiquity so melancholy as the answer of a celebrated orator,

on being asked how he did: 'As well as anyone can who is turned of fourscore, and who considers death as the greatest of all evils.' Death, when considered without any regard to futurity, must appear dreadful to the best and wisest of men. 'Such brutes as Diogenes and Crates, indeed, might treat the idea of death very cavalierly; might throw themselves on the first dunghill and die without regret. For what motive had they to wish to live? They cared for nobody; and the world, which in this matter is always perfectly just and well-bred, returned the compliment, and nobody cared for them.' When asked the same question, Mrs. Carter answered: 'As to your inquiries of how I do? and what I think? I do like anyone who every day feels increasing symptoms of the depredations of time on a shattered machine, and I endeavour to think such thoughts as befit such a discovery.'

Mrs. Carter held it to be a very unreasonable kind of impatience to quarrel with those elements to which we belong, and which, with all their inconveniences, we are generally very unwilling to quit; yet the world can never bestow any real and secure enjoyment, unless it is connected with the hope of a better. For

the dark cloud of death is ever impending over the gayest scene, and the trap-door constantly opening beneath our feet. Surely it must be worth our attention to try and penetrate the shade, and discover the prospect of immortality and happiness beyond.

No one can dispute Bourdaloue's assertion, that as the certainty of dying is more assured than any other truth that can be demonstrated or proved, the only way to annihilate the fear of it is to dare to look it in the face. 'I must die,' wrote Epictetus; 'but must I die groaning? Why should I not depart smiling, cheerful and serene?' 'Keep your eye steadily fixed on the great reality of death,' he added, 'and all other things will shrink to their true proportion.'

Mrs. Carter agreed with a friend who wrote: 'Death is almost the only subject that is never treated of in conversation, farther than a mere uninteresting fact. Were any number of persons destined to embark for a distant, unknown country, of whom some might be called upon to-morrow, and all must be called thither soon, would they not be inquiring amongst themselves how each was provided for the journey, and excite each other to despatch

what yet was possible to be done, and might to-morrow be irretrievably too late? Yet the flight of time is mighty apt to deceive our observation. How seldom is it that the mind can rise to that point of view whence it surveys time hurrying on towards eternity, and inviting all our hopes and fears to follow.'

A French preacher observed that 'though we know we must die we are not persuaded of it because we do not know when or how, or under what circumstances.' We are still just as we were in childhood, when the nurse, whose authority was final on all grave subjects, under severe cross-examination always placed the life of man at a hundred years, regardless of the Psalmist's opinion to the contrary. To the small child who 'felt its life in every limb,' and had no doubt of being able to reach its utmost limit, was not that practically eternity?

An attempt to recall our earliest thoughts on the subject shows us that our own crude and childish notions of death were not, after all, far removed from those of the greatest empire-maker of our day, to whose powerful mind the position and surroundings of a resting-place for the 'sheer hulk' he had once inhabited seemed of supreme importance. As children in imagina-

tion, we localised a probable spot, it may be some tiny country church, occasionally visited, where our forbears lay, the prevailing atmosphere of the family pew forming a basis for speculation as to the aspect of the unseen vault below. Monotony and confinement, in which there would be the semi-consciousness of a sleepless night, summed up the impression. In London, of course, the neat and vacant gravel enclosures surrounding the churches conveyed the comforting assurance that, in town at least, no one ever died, though in the darkness of a winter's evening, that appeared to be the middle of the night, when the wind was in a certain direction, a bugle call rang clearly out, and represented to the imagination the agitating phenomenon of the last trumpet. These early impressions were assisted by the study of Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' at an age when the beauty of its language could not be appreciated, and the 'foul fiend Apollyon' with his hideous monsters, and Giant Despair of grim and surly voice, with his dark and nasty dungeon, were more sensational and realistic than the instruction about the Better Land, which even the hymn admitted to be

'Far, far away.'

Wandering one afternoon into a country church, at a time of great sorrow, the writer found these childish and heathenish ideas being actually inculcated by the following hymn for the young :

'Within the churchyard, side by side,
Are many long, low graves,
And some have stones set over them,
On some the green grass waves.

'Full many a little Christian child,
Woman, and man, lies there ;
And we pass near them every time
When we go in to prayer.

'They cannot hear our footsteps come,
They do not see us pass ;
They cannot feel the warm, bright sun
That shines upon the grass.

Cr. 'They do not hear when the great bell
Is ringing overhead ;
They cannot rise and come to church
Dim. With us, for they are dead.'

At which point the wheezing organ sank into a tragic diminuendo, to convey to the children's minds the helpless and hopeless sensation of those who could not rise and come to church, 'for they are *dead*.' It is only fair to add that the concluding verses mention the resurrection, though the materialistic and

earthly aspect in which it is often represented is entirely opposed to St. Paul's explanation of the grain of wheat. The gloomy and morbid views of death conveyed by the words:

> 'Soon will you and I be lying
> Each within his narrow bed,'

ignores the fact, that the one place where we never can be is our own tomb, unless we are buried alive.

Mrs. Carter wrote to Mrs. Vesey, who had been sinking her spirits by reflections on moss-covered grave-stones, 'Why will you suffer your imagination to fix itself on the dismal sound of the passing bell, and the dark chambers of the grave, instead of teaching it to wander through the regions of light and immortality, amidst the great community of happy spirits? You love society; take a view of that brilliant assembly described by an author who gives such excellent rules for securing admission to "the city of the living God and the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect"' (Heb. xii. 22, &c.).

If the mind, like Plato's discontented ghosts, only hovers over that scene of melancholy and desolation, without penetrating into the world

of life, activity, and social joy beyond it, from which the gentle spirits of those we mourn look back with compassion on our imperfect and insecure enjoyments, we are perpetually endeavouring to keep up their connection with our own, by inviting them back from the unfading blooms of paradise to a participation of our mortal roses with all their thorns, instead of accompanying our departed friends into their happy estate. But so it must be, for while on a future world we only reason, in whatever relates to the present we feel. We think with pleasure of friends now vanished out of sight, with whom a few months ago we conversed familiarly on this subject, whose minds are now open to these astonishing scenes. What clear views they have of those great truths that the foolish bustle of this world obscures!

Mrs. Carter anticipated through every change of existence continued enjoyment in the exercise of her intellect and affections, for she said, 'Wherever God's will is made the supreme object, all talents and all opportunities become great, and extend their consequences to eternity; while the most splendid effects that are produced from merely human or selfish motives vanish into nothing, and are lost in the

chaos of succeeding events. No wonder that the joys of folly should have their completion in a world with which they are to end, while those of a higher order should be incomplete in a world where they are only to begin. For when death once drops the curtain on the harlequin farce of versatile, unmeaning folly, all hope of any future representation is for ever lost.' Two things, said Epictetus, are mingled in the generation of man: body in common with the animals, and reason and intelligence in common with the gods. Many incline to the kinship that is mortal and miserable, and few to that which is Divine and happy.

The gentle but feeble-minded Mrs. Vesey, who was tormented with doubts and fears on all subjects both in heaven and earth, bid Mrs. Carter tell her what no mortal can tell, the manner in which soul and body are affected by each other. She answered, 'Our being so little able to account for a point so intimately near us affords a striking lesson of humility, and should check our idle curiosity in other instances of truth beyond our comprehension.

> 'In vain we search the wondrous cause to find
> How mind on body, body acts on mind.'

The union between body and soul must ever be unaccountable to all human researches. Dean Swift lost his understanding while he retained robust bodily strength. Bishop Sherlock preserved the whole vigour of his soul when his body was entirely worn out. In some the powers of body and mind sink gradually together in a gentle decay. Old age is indeed a sad season if the mind goes first, but, God be thanked, it is often otherwise.

Socrates allowed no more personal existence to the material and visible part of the human composition than the garment that covers it — a speculation Mrs. Carter thought very fine and very true. Yet she said, so strong were her prejudices, that though this external nothing was only a circumstance belonging to her friend Mrs. Vesey, liable to be overturned on a precipice or drowned in the Irish Sea, she should feel very differently on any such an accident than if it happened to Mrs. Vesey's respectable crimson furred cloak.

Of what corporeal identity consists not all solutions of chemistry, Mrs. Carter supposed, will ever be able to unfold. The real essence of every individual body may perhaps be comprised in a single particle of a texture so con-

stituted, as to resist all the waste and impression of time and accidents, and capable of being expanded into all the proportions of an organised form. This conjecture, she added, implies no contradiction, and seems to solve every difficulty. The microscope discovers the largest oak to be contained in the acorn, and the full ear in a grain of wheat, the very simile of which St. Paul makes use.

The Romans, during the persecution of the Christians under Marcus Aurelius, must have vaguely felt this indestructibility of the individual, for in the martyrdom of Polycarp, not satisfied with killing his body, they threw his ashes into the river, hoping to destroy that essence of life which like the grain of wheat will again expand into a spiritual body.

'Our views on mummies,' a learned friend lately remarked, 'depends on the use we anticipate for our bodies in the future.' For the absolute material shell that our spirits once inhabited there is assuredly none, therefore the method by which it returns to mother earth once more to join in the eternal process of revivification, is immaterial, but for that essence or germ through which our bodies of humiliation will be 'made like unto His glorious body,' the

use will be eternal. Dr. Johnson reminds us that the grain which is sown is not the same as the grain which grows, but that it is enough if there be such a sameness as to distinguish the identity of person. We may smile at the idea of those sects who have thought any mutilation of the body in this life would injure it for the next, and therefore would not permit even the necessary amputation of a limb, but the root of the idea is a beautiful one. In childhood, any attempt to criticise the appearance of our fellow-creatures was promptly checked by a severe reminder that people do not make themselves, whereas by every thought, word, and deed, by every trick, habit and expression they are every day making themselves, not only their minds but their bodies, both for time and for eternity, and should be striving with both towards perfection. Their characters have built up everything but the mere shell. Beauty from within is neither skin-deep nor fleeting as we were taught, and whatever the outer frame may be like, wherever the beauty of the mind and spirit shine out, every fresh line adds force and character, and shows the greatness of the soul within. Only those deform that come from a narrow, envious, hard

and frivolous disposition. Though the influence of heredity cannot be denied, we are descended from what Carlyle calls such a 'cartload of ancestors' that the influence of one may neutralise that of the other, and we are practically free to follow what is good in the best of them. Warning is as valuable as example. The process by which our bodies will decay and our personality remain unchanged is even now taking place, for science teaches us that every particle changes in seven years, and yet that same indestructible individuality continues throughout our lives. The resurrection, if accepted according to St. Paul's spiritual teaching and not obscured by the materialistic ideas of our own earthly minds, solves all doubts as to our retaining our individuality and powers of recognition in eternity. Even the ancients, when they looked on the unearthly beauty and majesty of death, intuitively felt its resemblance to sleep.

Mrs. Carter found among the innumerable advantages of true religion was that of its freeing the mind from the terrors of superstition. She wrote to Mrs. Vesey, who was tormented with doubts about a future state :

'Why did you start and turn your eyes to

the opening door? Ah, my dear Mrs. Vesey, the heart is wiser and honester than the head. If at that hour of silence and solemn thought Lady Anne [Dawson] had been permitted to stand before you, could even that have been more convincing than the voice of common sense, which with intuitive perception assents to the truth of eternal revelation, and pronounces it impossible that such virtue could ever die.'

Mrs. Carter's mind was 'perpetually thwarted and held back by the weakness of her body, and her intellectual pursuits interrupted by a weak head and fluttering nerves, that no change of air or water would affect, but the air of paradise, and the waters which are bordered by the tree of life.' She knew something of the contention of which St. Paul speaks, the warfare of the flesh and the spirit.

Her mind, Mrs. Chapone said, should have been joined to a Herculean body, which could have supported its share of the fatigues of so active a companion. In the quarrels of Mrs. Carter's body and mind, she was inclined to side with body, who as she suspected met with hard usage from its towering mate, who seemed to treat it with disdain, and hardly acknowledge

it as a companion and partner. Mrs. Chapone declared she would in fact as soon be Dr Jortin's wife; and yet it had always been her prayer that she might never be the wife of an overgrown scholar.

In 1740, at the age of twenty-three, Mrs. Carter wrote the following dialogue on the subject:

'Says Body to Mind, "'Tis amazing to see,
We're so nearly related, yet never agree,
But lead a most wrangling, strange sort of life,
As great plague to each other as husband and wife.
The fault's all your own, who with flagrant oppression
Encroach ev'ry day on my lawful possession.
The best room [1] in my house you have seized for your own,
And turn'd the whole tenement quite upside down,
While you hourly call in a disorderly crew
Of vagabond rogues,[2] that have nothing to do
But run in and out, hurry scurry, and keep
Such a horrible uproar, I can't get to sleep.
There's my kitchen [3] sometimes is as empty as sound,
I call for my servants,[4] not one's to be found:
They all are sent out on your Ladyship's errand,
To fetch some more riotous guests in, I warrant!
And since things are growing, I see, worse and worse,
I'm determin'd to force you to alter your course."
Poor Mind, who heard all with extreme moderation,
Thought it now time to speak, and make her allegation:
"'Tis I that, methinks, have most cause to complain,
Who am crampt and confin'd like a slave in a chain.

[1] The head. [2] The thoughts. [3] The stomach.
[4] The spirits.

I did but step out, on some weighty affairs,
To visit, last night, my good friends in the stars,
When, before I was got half as high as the moon,
You dispatch'd Pain and Languor to hurry me down;
Vi et armis they seiz'd me, in midst of my flight,
And shut me in caverns as dark as the night."
"'Twas no more," reply'd Body, "than what you deserv'd;
While you rambled abroad, I at home was half starv'd,
And, unless I had closely confin'd you in hold,
You had left me to perish with hunger and cold."
"I've a friend," answers Mind, "who, tho' slow, is yet sure,
And will rid me, at last, of your insolent pow'r:
Will knock down your mud walls, the whole fabric demolish,
And at once your strongholds and my slav'ry abolish:
And while in the dust your dull ruins decay,
I shall snap off my chains and fly freely away."'

The above dialogue was no doubt intended to show that as, to the Christian, divorce and suicide are alike impossible, body and mind during their temporary connection must, by a system of give and take, find a *modus vivendi*, and like an ill-assorted couple try not to let their diverse interests and inclinations clash, till at last something like real harmony will grow up. The body if its weaknesses are neglected will revenge itself, and always manage to have the last word. The note of triumph in the last two lines expresses the release of the mind, which at death flies freely away from that 'dull clog the body,' just as in our dreams, unfettered

by distance and a thousand other disabilities, we pass at once,

'So swift a pace hath thought,'

into the society of our friends and the enjoyment of unrestrained intercourse. The sense of detachment of body and mind is more common amongst Eastern nations, and apart from all differences of creed, accounts for much of their indifference to death: that feeling that St. Paul expresses as 'whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth.'

The prospect of a solitary passage through the heavy road and dim twilight of our concluding journey Mrs. Carter admitted was a melancholy idea, but happily there are few cases in which it is verified. Divine goodness raises up successive comforts through the whole of our progress, which alleviates our sorrow for those we have lost. 'Every individual that strongly engages our affection has some characteristic and distinguishing mark. Thus, while our present companions assist us to pursue our journey with cheerfulness and spirit, the regret for those whom we have lost gives a delightful prospect of our arrival at that home where human happiness will be rendered

complete by the assembly of all those who have assisted us through different stages of our mortal passage.'

Mrs. Carter acted on Dr. Johnson's advice and kept her friendship in constant repair. For if a man does not make new friends as he advances through life, he will very soon find himself alone.

Pascal wrote : ' Il est injuste qu'on s'attache, car on n'est la fin de personne.'

The end of all living creatures Mrs. Carter argued was happiness. The pleasure and affection we feel in the fine qualities of our associates is one of the noblest and most reasonable sources of human happiness. To justify this attachment it is not necessary that we should be the 'end' and sole object of our friends, it suffices that we should be a means of their happiness. Pascal continues : ' Mais il est injuste que l'on s'attache, parce que nous mourrons.' 'Cela se répond fort naturellement,' exclaimed Mrs. Carter : 'nous revivrons.' ' May we not delight in our friends because they may be separated from us for a time ? An attachment that does not look beyond the grave is unworthy of being immortal. When one contemplates this present life, not as a separate

state, but, as it is in truth, a part of eternity, the objection that we must die does not affect the question.'

Pascal's notions of duty appeared to Mrs. Carter to be the outcome rather of a severe and gloomy temper than to be founded on the cheerful, social spirit of the Gospel. He was, however, to be esteemed and compassionated for having turned the edge of that severity chiefly on his own ease. It was not in the New Testament that poor Pascal found a direction for wearing a spiked girdle. What a monstrous fabric of absurdities enthusiasm and superstition have erected on that simple plan which Divine wisdom has proposed in the Gospel!

'Very few,' she added, 'have sufficient strength of mind not to be hurt by great numbers of what are called good books. I am not setting all serious reading at defiance. Heaven forbid! But it is most devoutly to be wished, people would make their Bible their principal study.'

Mrs. Carter's opinion of Pascal is merely quoted for what it is worth. Whether his book 'Les Pensées' is studied from a religious or from merely a literary point of view, it must be admitted to be one of the most perfect works

existing in the French language, and is incomparable in depth and beauty. Even Voltaire allowed that Pascal was a model of eloquence and humour. Mrs. Carter's horror of 'goody-goody' books has been shared by many serious thinkers, who deplore the mischief done by them. But had she lived in the twentieth century what would she have thought of the religious novel, that is often irreligious and even sacrilegious? Sacred subjects are lightly handled and even dragged through the mud, and that by some of our most brilliant writers. By harping on three strings they insure an eager audience. They appeal to the weary and heavy-laden hearts that, disappointed with the distorted view of religion presented to them through human agencies, are ready to hear any new thing concerning those vital questions of life and death with which they are at times confronted. By sailing as near the wind as they dare, along the thin imaginary border of virtue and vice, they pander to the idle curiosity of those who desire to penetrate the 'mystery of iniquity.' Finally, they appeal to the masses by a caricature of social circles into which many of their readers have no other means of access. For instance, when the fundamental truths of

Christianity are treated as though they could be lightly discarded and as lightly resumed, our humanity and common sense are affronted; for it is assumed that our faith rests only on miracles, while the Great Personality of their Worker, that alone makes them credible, is lost sight of.

From Hannah More, who was her zealous and attached friend for near thirty years, Mrs. Carter differed in religious views, 'just enough to exercise their mutual charity.' To Mrs. More, though she loved her honest, correct heart, cultivated intellect, and calm, orderly mind, Mrs. Carter appeared to be 'most strictly High Church,' for she dreaded nothing so much as irregularity, and scrupulously forebore reading any book, however sound and sober, which proceeded from any other quarter. She would on no account read Doddridge or Pascal.

To Mrs. Vesey—1766

'Yet check that impious thought, my gentle friend,
Which bounds our prospects by our fleeting breath,
Which hopeless sees unfinish'd Life descend,
And ever bars the prison gates of Death.

'Ah! what is Friendship, if at once disjoin'd?
The sympathetic tie unites no more;
Ah! what is Virtue, if below confined?
The fruitless struggle of a toilsome hour.

'To perfect good thro' each progressive stage
The pow'rs of intellectual being tend,
Nor raging elements, nor wasting age,
Shall e'er defeat their Heav'n-appointed end.

'To perfect joy, from pain and chance secure,
The sighing heart springs upwards from the dust,
Where, safe from suff'ring and from frailty pure,
Unite the social spirits of the just.

'O'er the sad relics of our mortal clay
No more let Fancy sink in hopeless grief;
But, rais'd by Faith to happier views, survey
The blooming forms of renovated life.'

'Thus amidst the wastes of Mortality, the havoc of raging elements, and the dissolutions of consuming years, the thoughts look forward to a period of restoration, and anticipate the voice of the Archangel proclaiming to a renovated world "that time shall be no more."'

Miss Catherine Phillimore has kindly allowed me to add her beautiful translation of Aleardo Aleardi's poem, in which he compares the horse and his rider to soul and body engaged in the battle of life, which like the Italian races, with their fierce struggle for the Palio, is more a fight than a race.

'God hath knit
The Soul and Body in one mystic bond,
As horse and rider, and then sent them forth
To run their course upon the race of life.
Along the way the strife is permanent—
And now the rider with decided voice
The steed controls, and now with sudden swerve
The horse has thrown his rider in the dust.
Yet joined together onwards still they pass
O'er gently swelling slope through forest dark,
Flying o'er dreary marsh and pleasant plain,
Until at last one day the charger falls
Worn out, his strength all spent—
The hollow tomb
Gives back the echo of his dying groan.

'Free to his feet the rider springs
And seeks the face of Him
Who counts alike each victory and each fall.'

As an octogenarian Mrs. Carter travelled every winter by 'diligence' to London, where she found most of her friends had already assembled, and 'the birthday' brought the rest. She usually set out from Deal by moonlight at 8 P.M. and reached Clarges Street at 11 A.M. the following day. The first part of the road was safe from robbers, and daylight protected the travellers, before they reached Hanging Wood, where the highwaymen deposited their ill-gotten gains in a cavern, that could only be

explored by a detachment of cavalry and foot. They did not breakfast till they could do so in security at Dartford. Mrs. Carter's friends made a great outcry at her mode of travelling, but she assured them there was no hazard, and that she found it much easier than 'drawling through' two days and sleeping on the road. In January 1801, at the age of eighty-four, she dined with Lord Cremorne on the day of her arrival, and felt no subsequent fatigue, though owing to the state of the roads she had been 'jolted black and blue.' She considered herself lucky in avoiding a heavy snow-storm, and only complained that the dirt of the London streets prevented her taking enough exercise.

On December 24, 1805, Mrs. Carter arrived in Clarges Street for her usual winter season. She was able to dine with a few of her nearest friends. Her whole life had been a preparation for death, and she was ready when the sudden call came. She spoke very little during her last short illness, even to Lady Cremorne, her most devoted friend, who never left her, and on February 19, 1806, in her eighty-ninth year, her happy spirit passed away without a struggle.

Her body was interred in the burial-ground of Grosvenor Chapel, in connection with St. George's, Hanover Square, in accordance with her desire that it should be buried 'with as little expense as possible' wherever she died.

APPENDIX

GENEALOGICAL NOTE

BY ROBERT BRUDENELL CARTER, F.R.C.S.

THE recent inquiries of Mr. Francis Galton and others into the influence of heredity lend much support to the belief that 'the life of every man is to some extent written before he is born,' and that a knowledge of past family or racial influences is of definite value as an aid to the correct appreciation of character.

Elizabeth Carter was descended from a landed family of moderate estate, which was settled from an early period in Bedfordshire, and sent branches into the adjacent counties of Buckingham and Hertford. A common ancestor was Thomas Carter, of Higham, in the county of Bedford, who was seated there in the reign of Edward IV., and is mentioned in the records of the Heralds' College as bearing arms, 'Azure, a talbot statant between three round buckles, or.' On the tomb of one of his descendants, William Carter, erected in Kempston Church in 1702, it is said that the body of the deceased was brought for burial to the parish in which his family had 'possessed an estate

ever since the Conquest'; but this statement is perhaps only the expression of local tradition. Thomas Carter of Higham had three sons, of whom one, Richard, is described as 'of Bedford,' and left descendants who became landowners in the contiguous parishes of Offley and Lilley, in the county of Herts, while another son, William, and a third, Nicholas, are described as 'of Kempston, in the county of Beds.' All that is known of Nicholas is that he was Groom of the Stole to Henry VIII., and that, among manuscripts in the British Museum, there is an authority to him to make purchases of sheep and beeves for the victualling both of the King's household and of his intended military expedition beyond the seas. The instrument is dated March 18, 1513–4, and evidently refers to the expedition to Calais in that year. Nicholas Carter's will is in the Northampton registry, and he divided his property between his sons, John and Bartholomew, of whom there is no further record.

Nicholas Carter's brother William was a landed proprietor at Kempston, and during the reign of Henry VII., the arms, already mentioned, were completed by the grant of a crest, 'Out of a mural crown, or, masoned azure, a demi-monkey proper.' This crest was probably in recognition of the work of a member of the family who was received and rewarded by the King on returning from a voyage to 'the New Isle,' i.e. America. William Carter, whose will, proved in 1500, is in the Northampton registry, was succeeded at Kempston by his son Thomas, and he by his son William, with whom the pedigree of Carter of Kempston in the Bedfordshire Visitation of 1634

Photograph by Blake & Edgar, Bedford.

INSCRIPTION ON THE ANCELL MONUMENT ON THE NORTH WALL OF THE CHANCEL WITHIN THE SANCTUARY, GREAT BARFORD CHURCH, CO. BEDFORD (NR. ST. NEOTS).

'Here lyeth the body of Thomas Ancell, son and heir to Edward Ancell of West Mounton in the county of Somerset gent; who had to wife Elizabeth Whetley daughter and co-heir of Robert Whetley of Gt. Joneby in the county of Cumberland gent, by whom he had issue sonnes: Whetley, Oliver, Thomas, and Nicholas and left Thomas livinge and daughters Agnes, Rose, Mary, Temperance, Elizabeth, Elizabeth and Anne, whereof he bestowed six in marriage and left five of them living and being of the age of 71 years deceased in the faythe of Christ the 27th day of April Anno Dni 1591.'

commences. This William is therein recorded to have married Elizabeth, sister and sole heir of William Cranfield, of Great Barford, in the same county; and the son and heir of this marriage, also William, is recorded to have married 'Mary, third daughter of Thomas Aunscell, of Great Barford,' to whom and to whose family there is an elaborate monument in Great Barford Church, a monument on which four sons are sculptured kneeling behind their father, and seven daughters behind their mother, and on which the arms of both husband and wife (daughter and heir of Robert Wheatley of Great Joneby in the county of Cumberland), are displayed. The marriage of William Carter and Mary Aunscell was a prolific one, for upon his tomb in Kempston Church there are two brass plates, one of which bears the following inscription:

'Here lieth the bodie of William Carter, Gent., who tooke to wife Marie, the daughter of Thomas Aunsell, Esq., by whom he had issue seaven sones and ten daughters. He died the first day of September, 1605. She, surviving, in memorial of her affection to him living, caused this monument to be made over him.'

The second plate bears a rude engraving, which appears intended to represent the 'seaven sones' mentioned in the inscription. The baptisms of six of the sons and nine of the daughters are duly recorded in the Kempston register, as well as the marriages of six of the daughters; but the Visitation record mentions only the eldest son, Thomas, who succeeded to the estate, and two of his brothers.

In course of time, the branch of the family which

had settled at Offley came to be represented by William Carter of that place, who had sons, William, Thomas and Robert, of whom the two elder, at least, became active on the side of the Parliament in the Civil War. 'William Carter, of Offley, gent.,' appears in the list of the Hertfordshire Parliamentary Committee; and William Carter, with no local designation, and no prefix of 'Rev.,' preached before the House of Commons, on their solemn fast, August 31, 1642, a sermon entitled 'Israel's Peace with God, Benjamine's Overthrow.' He received the thanks of the House, and the sermon was published by order. The two younger brothers, Thomas and Robert, both settled at Dinton, in the Vale of Aylesbury, a village in the immediate neighbourhood of John Hampden, and where Simon Mayne was lord of the manor. William and Thomas married sisters, Frances and Jane, daughters of William Curtis, of Bassingbourne, in the county of Cambridge, the place in which the mother of Oliver Cromwell resided during her married life with her first husband, William Lynne, Esq. Thomas was described in his marriage licence, in 1612, as 'generosus,' but he afterwards took orders and became vicar of Dinton, a preferment which he held for many years. He was appointed a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and, on the occasion of another 'solemn fast,' June 28, 1643, he preached before the House of Commons a sermon on 'Prayer's prevalencie for Israel's safetie,' for which he received the thanks of the House, with an order that the sermon should be printed. This was done, the author adding an Address or Dedication to the House extending over

two pages. Thomas Carter's eldest son, William, was called to the Bar, and seems to have died early; but his second son, John, born at Dinton in 1622, entered the Parliamentary army, attained the rank of major-general, was military governor of North Wales during the Protectorate, joined Monk after the death of Cromwell, and was knighted at Whitehall in 1660.

Nicholas Carter, of Kempston, the second of the 'seaven sones' mentioned on his father's tomb, appears to have maintained friendly relations with his kinsfolk at Dinton, and on May 1, 1609, he was married in Dinton Church to Alice, daughter of Christopher Brydone, a landowner in the adjacent parishes of Haddenham and Aston Sandford. The eldest son of this marriage, also Nicholas, was born a year later at Haddenham, and was Elizabeth Carter's great-grandfather. Like his relative and neighbour, John Carter, he seems to have entered the Parliamentary army, and there is a memorandum in the Record Office, conjecturally assigned in the Catalogue to the year 1665, and noting that employment is to be given to three men who were 'stout and of good conduct,' one of them being 'Nicholas Carter, a captain in Colonel Steevens's regiment.' He died at Dinton in 1679, leaving an only son, James, who settled at Aston Abbotts in the vicinity, where he is traceable through the register and other local records for many years, and where two sons, James and Nicolas, were born to him by a first marriage, and (besides children who died young) a daughter Dorcas by a second marriage. James, his eldest son, married

Mary, daughter of John Vere, of Cester Over House, in the parish of Monk's Kirby, in the county of Warwick, Esq., and was a merchant in London, but left no children; and Nicolas, his second son and Elizabeth Carter's father, who entered as a pensioner at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1707, and graduated M.A. in 1714, D.D. in 1728, married, firstly, Margaret, daughter and co-heir of Richard Swayne, of Bere, in the county of Dorset, Esq., and secondly Mary Bean, of Deal. Miss Swayne's mother was a daughter of Thomas Trenchard, of Wolverton and Lychet Maltravers, in the same county, Esq, and through him was descended from Paganus Trenchard, who held land in Dorset under Henry I., and also from the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I., and her second husband, Humphrey de Bohun, fourth Earl of Hereford, third Earl of Essex, and Constable of England.

The foregoing genealogy, the whole of which has been proved by documentary evidence, and is registered at the Heralds' College, appears to have been entirely unknown to the Rev. Montagu Pennington, Elizabeth Carter's nephew and biographer, who was content to say that her grandfather (James Carter, of Aston Abbotts) 'was a considerable farmer and grazier in the Vale of Ailesbury, where his family had been settled for some generations,' adding that 'probably it was originally from Cornwall, since in the old ruined chapel of St. Laurence, near Bodmin, among the arms of the neighbouring families who had been benefactors to it, are those of Carter, the same as borne by those of

Bucks, viz. azure, two lions rampant, or, which are also borne by the Carters of St. Cullumbe, in Cornwall.' We have here a curious illustration of the ignorance and indifference about matters of heraldry which prevailed during much of the eighteenth century. It was by no means uncommon even for gentlemen of good lineage to be ignorant of their own armorial bearings, and not only to seek for information about them from engravers or stationers as ignorant as themselves, but actually to use arms that were supplied to them by such persons, among whom the arms of the Carters of St. Columb were so popular that they have been thus bestowed upon several families of the name in different parts of England, none of whom have had any title to them. Elizabeth Carter's brothers seem to have been beguiled in this manner, for variants of the St. Columb arms appear upon their bookplates and tombstones, although they were entitled to the talbot statant and the buckles above mentioned, a bearing of older date than the St. Columb coat. The family of Carter of St. Columb terminated in three co-heiresses about 1670, and very few, if any, of the persons of the name who now use their coat of arms would be able to establish a claim to it, or to obtain the sanction of the Heralds' College to its continued employment.

Although Dr. Nicolas Carter (who strenuously objected to the customary 'h' in his baptismal name) was appointed, soon after his ordination, to be Perpetual Curate of St. George's Church, then newly built at Deal as a Chapel of Ease, and although his son, Mr. John Carter, was County Chairman of East Kent for

many years, there was no connection of any kind between his family and the Carters of Crundale and other places in the county, opulent yeomen who had been established therein for some centuries, and who, not having armorial bearings of their own, have sometimes been among those who have displayed the arms of the Carters of St. Columb.

Elizabeth Carter was not singular in her family in possessing literary cultivation. Of her sister Margaret, Pennington writes that, 'Although greatly inferior to her sister in learning, she was more than her equal in wit and quickness of parts. In learning, however, she was far from being deficient, being a very good Latin and French, and a tolerable Greek and Italian scholar, with some knowledge also of Hebrew.' Their brother, John Carter, was a Cambridge graduate, and afterwards a captain in the 9th Regiment of Foot. After leaving the service, he settled at Deal, was placed on the Commission of the Peace for East Kent, and became County Chairman, a position which he held for nearly forty years. An obituary notice in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' for September 1810, describes him as 'a man of very lively and acute natural parts, very highly cultivated; an exact and elegant classical scholar; an excellent linguist, and a man of extensive general reading. His pen was continually in his hand; and, in the course of a long life, he was the author of several pamphlets and political letters of a temporary nature.' This gentleman left three daughters, of whom the two younger were both authors. Charlotte, who married Captain von

Humboldt, of the Hanoverian Hussars, wrote a poem entitled 'Corinth,' and some minor poems which were published with it in 1821; and Hannah, her younger sister, before her marriage to Mr. George Smith, Secretary to the Navy Board, had an opportunity of visiting Paris before the 'hundred days.' She was one of a small party who were the first English people to enter France after the departure of Napoleon for Elba; and she witnessed, in very favourable circumstances, the whole of the celebrations connected with the return of the Bourbons. Her letters to her sister excited so much interest among the friends to whom they were shown that the writer was induced, especially by the advice of Sir Egerton Brydges, to give them a wider circulation; and they were published by Messrs. Longman, in 1814, under the title of 'Letters from a Lady to her Sister during a Tour to Paris in the months of April and May, 1814.' Her descriptions of people and events display much power of observation, much liveliness, and no small amount of literary skill.

R. B. C.

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